

LOUISE ❸ ❸  
AUGUSTA ❸  
LECHMERE

OBLATES OF THE ASSUMPTION,  
HOLME HALL  
~~WITHDRAWN~~  
HOLME-ON-SPALDING-MOOR,  
YORK.

258









LOUISE A. LECHMERE.

From the original painting in the possession of Mrs. Arthur Shirley,  
of St. Andrew's, Lustleigh, South Devon.

# LOUISE AUGUSTA LECHMERE

*By* HER SON  
THE REV. HENRY D'ARRAS, S.J.

WITH HER OWN NARRATIVE  
OF HER CONVERSION

*TRANSLATED BY*  
MRS. FREDERIC RAYMOND-BARKER

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## PRELIMINARY NOTE

THE author declares his entire submission to all decrees of the Holy See relating to the attribution of sanctity, or the use of the word "Saint." Any such term employed in this work is to be taken in its ordinary acceptation only, and not in any way as attempting to forestall the judgment of the Church.

## LETTER FROM CARDINAL MERRY DEL VAL TO THE AUTHOR.

MON RÉV. PÈRE,

Le 26 Septembre, 1909.

Le SAINT PÈRE a agréé l'hommage que vous lui avez fait de votre livre, revêtu de l'approbation ecclésiastique, intitulé, *Une Anglaise Convertie*.

SA SAINTÉTÉ a vu avec plaisir que vous ayez consacré ces pages à la mémoire de votre mère, convertie à la Foi Catholique.

Puisse cette biographie aider d'autres âmes à suivre le même exemple.

En vous remerciant, le SAINT PÈRE vous envoie de cœur la Bénédiction Apostolique.

Je saisis cette occasion pour vous exprimer, mon Rév. Père, mes sentiments dévoués en Notre Seigneur.

H. Card. MERRY DEL VAL.

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### TRANSLATION.

REV. FATHER,

26th September, 1909.

The Holy Father accepts with pleasure the homage you have paid him in presenting him with your book, approved by ecclesiastical authority, and having for its title, *Une Anglaise Convertie*.

His Holiness is glad that you should have consecrated these pages to the memory of your mother, a convert to the Catholic Faith.

May this biography help other souls to follow the same example.

The Holy Father, while thanking you, sends you from his heart the Apostolic Benediction.

I seize this opportunity to express to you, Rev. Father, my sincere affection in Our Lord.

H. Card. MERRY DEL VAL.



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# LOUISE AUGUSTA LECHMERE

## I

### INTRODUCTION

LOST in the splendour surrounding the names of the great converts who were the first-fruits of the Oxford Movement, and who, at the cost of untold sacrifices, returned to England's ancient Faith, were many other sincere and fervent souls, in spheres of life less open to public view, who chose the same steep and rugged path, and the story of whose experience were well worth the telling, if only as an incentive and encouragement to those still seeking their true Mother and their rightful Home.

One such record will be found in the following pages.

Louise Augusta Lechmere, born in 1829, the year of "Catholic Emancipation," was the younger daughter of Sir Edmund and Lady Lechmere, of Rhydd Court, in the county of Worcester.

At some period subsequent to the change of religion the Lechmeres conformed to the new Establishment, but it is on record that as late as 1616 an Edmund Lechmere had to flee into

Herefordshire, being hunted for as a "Popish recusant."\*

Sir Edmund, the father of Louise, was not only respected for his position as a county magnate of ancient lineage, but was highly esteemed for his upright and kindly nature, which won the affection of all who knew him, especially his neighbours and dependents.

Extracts copied by his daughter from his private journal show him to have been sincerely religious according to his convictions, as well as charitable to the poor.

In 1833 he wrote : " I have begun my pilgrimage through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. How dreadful, how intolerable, would be its gloom, were it not illumined by my Saviour's love, to enlighten and cheer me on my arduous way !"

And after visiting a poor man who was ill, he prays that God will enable his " poor brother " to renounce his sins, adding the petition " that he may, by faith in Thee, beloved Lord, be Thine by adoption and grace."

Lady Lechmere, Louise's mother (*née* Murray),† had been Maid of Honour to Queen Charlotte, Consort of George III. Many of her letters of that period have been preserved by her children. In one of them she describes a banquet given by the Prince Regent in honour of the exiled King, Louis XVIII., and the Duchesse d'Angoulême.

\* See Appendix A.

† The Hon. Clara Augusta. See Appendix B.

Contrary to the ordinary opinion in France, she considers her "very handsome."

Like her husband, Lady Lechmere had a high sense of duty. Like him, also, she was imbued with the strongest prejudices against "Popery." She lived at a time when to embrace Catholicism was regarded not only as religious apostasy, but as social degradation.

Her daughter Louise was one of those ardent and resolute natures who, when once convinced that a course of conduct is right, are not to be deterred from it by any earthly consideration, even though the cry of the heart must be disregarded to satisfy the imperious cravings of the soul.

How this young girl, brought up in the midst of adverse influences, was led into the Catholic Church, she herself relates with the utmost simplicity and sincerity in the pages headed, "My Conversion," which form the central portion of this book, and which she wrote in compliance with the request of Monseigneur Guilibert, Bishop of Fréjus.\*

In 1858, eight years after her reception into the Church, Miss Lechmere married M. Louis Lambert d'Arras, an officer in the French Navy. He belonged to an old family of Picardy and Artois, which had given to France from generation to generation many brave defenders.

Deeply religious himself, he knew how to appre-

\* To whose kindness the Author is indebted for the original MS., written in French.

ciate the heroic character of one who in early life had "fought the good fight" and braved so many storms before putting into port. He had already won the esteem of Sir Edmund, who, in spite of his Protestant prejudices, did full justice to the sterling qualities of his future son-in-law.

Yielding to the authoritative wishes of competent advisers, the children of Madame d'Arras have permitted the story of her life to be made known beyond the circle of those who had the privilege of her personal acquaintance and friendship, as a tribute offered by their deep affection to her beloved memory.\*

#### NOTE BY THE AUTHOR.

Doubt has frequently been expressed as to whether Father Ludwig was justified in urging Miss Lechmere's immediate reception into the Church. The extraordinary difficulties put in the way of intending converts at that date in England—difficulties far greater than we can now realize—may have appeared to warrant his insistence. We can only say that, in analogous circumstances, other priests, of unquestioned zeal and experience, are known to have adopted more patient and considerate methods, carefully avoiding any approach to undue haste or pressure. A case in point may be found in the *Vie du R. P. de Ravignan*, vol. ii., p. 283.

\* From the Introduction to the French edition, by the Comtesse de Courson.

## II

### MISS LECHMERE

LOUISE AUGUSTA LECHMERE was born at Worcester on February 9, 1829. Until the death of her grandfather, in 1849, she and her parents, sister and brother, lived at the picturesque little town of Malvern, the houses and gardens of which climb the sides of the Malvern Hills. Most attractive are these rocky slopes of grey and green, especially when they are adorned from base to summit with arabesques of purple foxglove.

This spot, one of the fairest in England, helped to develop in Miss Lechmere the keen love of "beautiful Nature," which she never lost, even in old age.

About three miles from Malvern is the village of Hanley Castle, one of the homes of the Lechmeres from the time of the Conquest. It was on this part of his estates that Sir Anthony Lechmere lived, at Rhydd Court. This mansion, on the banks of the Severn, is of comparatively recent date. Its park and gardens join, at a few miles' distance, those of Severn End, another and very ancient residence of the family, where almost every room has some historical association.

South of Hanley Castle rises the graceful parish church, with its double nave, dating from the fourteenth century. In accordance with an old feudal custom still subsisting in England, the parish is a benefice in the gift of the head of the family. At the time of which we write, the Vicar was Mr. Berwick Lechmere, a younger son of Sir Anthony.

Of the early childhood of Louise we know but little. The story of her conversion gives a few details, to which may be added certain practical jokes played in company with her brother and sister, and which she used to describe with all the gaiety of her youthful heart.

In her early years she was undoubtedly very exuberant, and sufficiently mischievous, but even amid her childish frolics she already showed herself full of ardent faith. When four or five years old, she and her parents had been spending some days at the Rhydd, where she had enjoyed herself greatly. When the time came for departure, she was called and sought for in vain, until at last she was discovered in one of the drawing-rooms in an attitude of fervent prayer. On being asked what she meant by it, she said she was begging Our Lord to send a downpour of rain and such a storm that they would not be able to return to Malvern. This naïve declaration was not forgotten, and often afterwards, if bad weather came on, someone would ask whether Louise had been at her prayers.

Still, there was in this precocious fervour no cause

for surprise. Her father and mother, though leading the easy and brilliant existence usual in their station of life, with the large and cordial hospitality customary in England—hunting-parties, dances, and various festivities—were at the same time very earnest in the fulfilment of their duties, and profoundly attached to their religious beliefs. But they both practised much of the narrow formalism which at that time characterized the Church of England, and which was beginning to arouse the anxious attention of such men as Keble, Pusey, Manning, Newman, and many more.

The education of Louise was on a virile plan. Her father, partly on the score of health, but chiefly with a view to the formation of character, intended his children to be hardy. He allowed no fire in their room in winter. Their instruction, as was generally the case in England at that period, was very careful and very varied. The child's manuscript books, with their long passages from Shakespeare and Dante, and well-chosen pages from the best French writers, show the soundness of her taste, and also her acquaintance with foreign languages.

Her parents, who both drew and painted well—several of Sir Edmund's paintings were engraved and published—were well versed in matters of art. Thus also Louise left many books filled with notes of her visits to museums, and detailed descriptions and appreciations of the masterpieces of painting. As for her passionate love of music, above all of sacred

music, she herself lets us know what this was in the story of her conversion.

The mention of these artistic tastes is not irrelevant, because it seems as if Providence had made use of them—in some measure, at least—in attracting her soul by the splendour and poesy of Catholic worship.

One more point remains to be noticed. Contrary to a generally received opinion on the French side of the Channel with regard to family life in England, Sir Edmund's "Journal," as also the correspondence of Lady Lechmere, of Louise, and of her sister and brother, prove that, both at Malvern and later on at Rhydd Court, parents and children, brother and sisters, were united by the most tender and delicate affection.

The first pages of a "Journal-Book," begun by Miss Lechmere April 27, 1856, only a few days after the death of her father, who had just disinherited her, depict more vividly than any other document the physiognomy of family life at the Rhydd, and give some idea of the terrible mental conflicts sustained by the new convert, when, by obeying the dictates of her conscience, she accepted the grief of seeing herself the cause of so much suffering to the parents whom she so tenderly loved.

I quote these pages almost in their entirety :

"On Wednesday, April 27, 1856, I lost my beloved father. An event like this makes an epoch in life.

It is the end of one stage of our pilgrimage, a link lost for ever from the chain of our affections.

“How many happy days of my childhood are recalled by my dearest father’s death! The days when I rode upon his knee, or was perched upon his shoulder, or when the good-fortune of taking a walk with him was one of my greatest delights. Alas! those days will never more return, but the remembrance of them will continue to shed a ray of hope on the future, and to brighten the sadness of the present.

“My beloved father’s end was sudden and unexpected. He had suffered for some time from gout, but this gave us no uneasiness. On Tuesday, April 1, we drove to Malvern, and spent a most delicious day. The weather was fine, bright, and warm, in spite of a treacherous wind. My father left us to go to Worcester in an open dog-cart. When we returned home he was sitting in an easy-chair by the fire. He appeared full of health and spirits. At dinner he told some of his famous ‘funny stories.’ In the evening we had music, and Edmund sang ‘The Old Clock on the Stairs.’ This was the last song that my beloved father ever heard. He then retired to his room. At half-past two I woke, and, hearing him cough very much, I went to him, and gave him something to relieve him. After lighting his fire I thought he would go to sleep, and left him. At half-past seven I went to him again, found him suffering much, and sent

for the doctor. My father said that he felt very weak. We helped him to rise, placed him in an easy-chair, and I rubbed his dear face and hands with eau-de-Cologne. He wished to lie down again. Some time after he asked for wine. I gave him some. He said : ' That is not enough ; give me Cognac.' I was seized with a strange fear, but yet did not realize his danger.

" Then, sending his manservant out of the room, he called me to him. ' My dear love,' he said, ' I fear I am dying !' His face was turned towards me, and he was breathing with difficulty. When I heard these terrible words I nearly fainted. I cried out with anguish, and ran to call my mother. When I returned to his bedside my poor father looked at me, and, seeing my distress, he said : ' Oh, my dear child, don't ! For pity's sake, don't ! . . .' I knelt down, and kissed his dear face for the last time before he died ; then I began to pray. My poor mother came in. . . . My father spoke a few words, and then lost consciousness. . . . We employed friction near the heart. . . . All was in vain. The beloved features were rapidly marked with the stamp of death : the eyes became fixed, then closed, and on the lips were signs of the last agony. All was over !

" My father was gone, and for ever ! He whom we cherished so tenderly, whose heart was so loving, was taken from us, without the power to say a last word, a final adieu, without giving us a last kiss

and a last blessing. All these things, so consoling to hearts bereaved, were denied to us. God so willed it, and we have no right to murmur or complain. To me at least was reserved the blessed privilege of being with him to the last, of hearing his last words, receiving his last sigh, of supporting his dear head, and of holding him in my arms at the very moment of his death !

“ Oh, father, father ! you never knew in this life how I loved you ! Now, in death, you doubtless know. You also know the anguish and the violent conflicts of my poor heart. Ah, yes ! now that all is made known to you, and you behold the Truth, your blessed soul no longer condemns me for having embraced the Truth, and with it the Cross, although in life I caused you so much suffering. Oh, how I loved you ! No one but myself can know how dearly. When you took me with you anywhere, my heart beat with joy ; when you looked kindly at me, I could have kissed your feet ; when you called me ‘ My dear child,’ it made my heart leap for gladness. Yes, father, I loved you, in spite of the grief I caused you. But you know all now. Now I feel that you love and pity me more than ever you did while here below, although you loved me so well.

“ Oh, who but my own poor heart alone could tell of all its bitterness and sorrow, its struggles and its agony, throughout the year preceding my entrance into the Church ? Who could say what I suffered

when I saw the tears of my father and mother, who were overwhelmed with grief, and when I felt that, in spite of all, it was my duty to persevere? And what anguish it was to me when I quitted them! None saw the tears which soaked my pillow or watered the floor of my little room at Malvern, at Clifton, and at the convent; or how many a time I remained prostrate in agony on the floor of my room during the silence of the night, weeping in bitter sorrow. How often my heart seemed ready to break with grief God only knows. I was losing my home, my fortune, my friends, and in a large measure the affection of my parents. I was losing the esteem and consideration of the world . . . and the giving up of all these things cost me a struggle that was indescribable. But I knew that God was calling me. I heard His voice speaking to my heart, and though that heart was breaking, I threw it at the foot of the Cross, and by the grace of God I embraced the Truth; and by this same grace I will keep this treasure, and persevere to the end along the thorny path and the narrow way that leads to eternal life.”\*

\* No account will be found in this notice of the death of Lady Lechmere, the mother of Madame d’Arras. I have not discovered any document having reference to this sad event. It took place February 29, 1865, a few days after the birth of my youngest sister, so that my mother had to make the hard sacrifice of being unable to go to her dying mother. The numerous letters of Lady Lechmere to her daughter give evidence of great elevation of soul, deep religious feeling, and the tenderest maternal affection. I



RHYDD COURT, WORCESTERSHIRE.

Seat of Sir Edmund Lechnere.



The reader now knows Miss Lechmere. In the following chapter she herself will relate to us how God called her to the Church.

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have often been told that when I was born, she remained on her knees by my cradle for a full hour, recommending me to Our Lord in fervent prayer. These details will make it easier to understand all the suffering, on both sides, on the occasion of Miss Lechmere's conversion.

### III

#### MY CONVERSION

THE first time I ever saw a Catholic church was at Boulogne-sur-Mer, where I was staying with my parents in 1838. I was then nine years old. My father took me one Sunday to the Church of St. Nicholas during High Mass. Accustomed as I was to the coldness of the Protestant service, the ceremonies of the Mass, the chanting, the vestments of the priests, the lights on the altar, and the incense, all seemed to me very beautiful, and made a strong impression upon me. I think it was the feast of some martyr, for, if I remember rightly, the vestments were red. The memory of what I then saw was never obliterated.

Many things struck me during this visit to Boulogne. I had a lively imagination, and my heart was easily touched. In our walks and drives we often went to the little chapel of the Scourging of Jesus. It was very poor and rustic. The present building, which is kept in good order and repair, gives no idea of the dilapidation of the former one. There I saw poor little children fervently praying; sailors also and boatmen brought their children and

lifted them up to kiss the crucifix. I should have liked to pray there also, but did not dare. At other times I saw children give an affectionate greeting to a priest, and receive his blessing. At church I saw some of them going to confession, and envied their happiness. I had read in some French book for the use of the young, a story about a child's confession, in which I had been struck by the fatherly kindness of the priest.

Neither my heart nor my imagination ever lost the impressions they received during this sojourn at Boulogne. They were to bear fruit later on.

I was thirteen years old when my mother went up to London for the "season," taking with her my sister, who was eighteen, to be presented at Court, and make her *début* in Society.

During my mother's absence, I remained with a lady who had been our governess, and who was now to keep me company, as well as attend to my studies. I had no other sister, my brother was at school, and my father, away from home all day on matters of business, only came in in the evening.

I was much attached to this lady. She was very religious, but a thorough Calvinist. We often conversed on religious subjects, said our prayers together, and in the evening read a chapter in the Holy Bible. I learnt many hymns by heart, taking great delight in them; for there is no doubt that I was habitually pious, although my naturally gay and lively disposition was greatly bent on amusement.

This lady often spoke to me of the happiness of "receiving the Sacrament" according to the Protestant Communion Service. She explained that, in partaking of the bread and wine in remembrance of Our Lord, we also partook in a spiritual manner of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

In the Protestant Church it is necessary to be confirmed by a Bishop before one may communicate. It so happened that there was to be a Confirmation held that same year at the little town of Malvern, where we lived. My governess was anxious that I should be confirmed. I, too, ardently desired it. We often spoke of it, and she and I both wrote to my mother to obtain her permission. To my great disappointment, my mother emphatically refused it, declaring that I was much too young and too giddy. I was not to think of it until I was sixteen.

During the three years which followed, a great change was coming over the Church of England.

I frequently listened to the very animated discussions which were rife at that time amongst all religious-minded Anglicans. They arose from the Oxford Movement — the doctrines preached by Newman, Pusey, Faber, and others, and particularly Newman's famous "Tract 90," which contained teaching that was entirely Catholic.

I listened attentively to what was said, but had no idea whatever as to what was really the teaching of the Catholic Church.

On reaching my sixteenth year, I went with my mother to London, and it was arranged that I should be confirmed at St. Paul's, Knightsbridge, our London parish. The Vicar of this church, Mr. Bennett, was a celebrated Ritualist, or, as it was then called, "Puseyite."

This was the first time I had seen a Ritualist church. I noticed a cross on the altar, between two unlighted candles, and witnessed a number of rites quite unknown in the Protestant Church.

I attended the services, which seemed to me very beautiful.

It would be difficult to give an idea of the dryness and dreariness of Protestant worship at that time. Nearly all the churches remained closed all the week, and smelt damp and mouldy when opened on Sundays. There was no altar, and on the communion table was no cross; there were no candles, no flowers, no sacred vestments, nor (except very rarely) any stained-glass windows.

The communion table was covered with a red velvet cloth,\* with a thick cushion at each end. The minister read the Epistle at one end and the Gospel at the other. Over the table, in two large frames, were the Ten Commandments, [and above these, or over the chancel arch, was a large framed painting of the Royal Arms, with the lion and

\* This only in the better-provided churches. The cloth was often nothing better than green baize, and not seldom old and faded.—TRANSLATOR.

unicorn supporters].\* The body of the church was filled with pews with doors, the seats being upholstered with red or green stuffs. Towards the middle of the church was the pulpit—or, rather, there were three pulpits, one above another. The topmost was for the preacher, in the middle one the service was read, and the lowest was occupied by the parish clerk, who made the responses, often in a very nasal tone, and with an impossible pronunciation.

The music, especially in the country churches, was often horrible. It consisted of two or three hymns, so discordantly sung as to incline one to laughter rather than devotion.

It was at this epoch that the Ritualists began to render their churches more attractive. They had stained-glass windows, altars of wood or stone, on which were placed candles and vases of flowers, with a cross in the centre. They also introduced stalls, occupied by the clergy and choristers in white surplices. The service was chanted, and the music really beautiful; but their churches were not at that time what they are now, when at the first glance one might suppose oneself to be in a Catholic church. They now have a crucifix on the altar, a sanctuary lamp, and even confessionals; the officiating minister, vested in a chasuble, like our priests, observes all the rubrics of the Mass; at Communion a wafer is administered instead of ordinary bread. But nothing of all this existed at the time of which I am speaking.

\* Any passage within brackets is an addition by the Translator.

As I said, I attended the services at Mr. Bennett's church, and in due time had to go to one of his curates to be examined in the Church Catechism.

This examination I shall never forget. When this clergyman asked me how many Sacraments there were, I answered, in the words of the Catechism: "Two only—that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord."

"Yes," said the curate, "these are the Sacraments necessary for salvation; but there are five more—Penance, Confirmation, Orders, Matrimony, and Extreme Unction."

I was speechless with surprise. I had never before heard that there were seven Sacraments. The curate asked me a few more questions, and sent me to Mr. Bennett. He inquired if I desired to receive Communion. I said that I did desire it, and was admitted as a candidate for Confirmation.

When the day of the ceremony came, my beloved mother gave me a little book of devotions called *Eucharistica*.

This book contained a strange medley of doctrines. In some parts these were Catholic, and spoke of the actual reception of the Body and Blood of Our Lord, while in others it was said to be merely bread and wine that was received in memory of the death of Christ—the doctrine that I had always been taught.\*

\* *Eucharistica*, a Companion to the Communion, containing Meditations, Prayers, and Select Passages from Old English Divines, with an Introduction by Archdeacon Wilber-

I knew not what I was to understand. I desired to accomplish the act of my first Communion with all possible sincerity, but what ought I to believe? Was I to receive the Body and Blood of Christ, my Lord and God, or was it merely blessed bread and wine?

In the church of which Mr. Bennett was Vicar, what were called the "elements" were brought from the vestry into the choir with all possible reverence, and with the singing of the *Sanctus*, etc., in English. The wine was in a handsome silver-gilt vessel, out of which it was poured into the chalices. The bread was then cut into very small bits, and placed on patens. Each communicant received one of these morsels in the hand, and drank a little from the chalice presented to him by the minister.

In many places, if any of the "consecrated" bread and wine remained after the Communions, the poor of the congregation were called up to the communion rail to eat and drink what was left.\*

In Ritualist churches of the present day, the minister places a wafer on the tongue, and also

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force. This was dated from the Vicarage, Brighton, January 25, 1830, and signed "S. W." Samuel Wilberforce became Bishop of Oxford and, later, of Winchester.

The contents of the book are extracted from the works of twenty-two English theologians, Colet being the only pre-Reformation writer among them.

\* The Translator of this account can recall some very disedifying scenes, especially in rural or very poor districts, if one of the recipients detained the "cup" too long before passing it on to others waiting for a share of its contents.

inculcates a belief in the Real Presence. The wine, however, is still given.

For two years I continued to attend Mr. Bennett's church whenever I was staying in London. Nevertheless, I often asked myself what could really be the Catholic doctrine which Newman, Faber, and many others had recently embraced.

I had heard my father praise the magnificence of the churches of Italy, and whilst my mind was full of all the discussions going on around me, my imagination busied itself in picturing the splendour of the Catholic ceremonial.

The year following my Confirmation I went with my mother to Brighton. There, one morning, I entered the Catholic church.\* It was during Mass. I did not understand it at all, but at the Elevation, the silence, and that inexplicable something which seizes one at the lifting up of the Host and Chalice, deeply impressed me, and without knowing that this was the Mass, and in spite of myself, I adored. I shall never forget what I then experienced. Grace was doubtless beginning to work within me, and to touch my heart.

I possessed a good voice, and had singing-lessons from an Italian master. He once said to me : " You must practise your scales every day without

\* This must have been the Church of St. John the Baptist, the only Catholic church then in Brighton. It was built for, or by, Mrs. Fitzherbert, wife of King George IV. There are now five churches, besides convent chapels, in Brighton (1910).—TRANSLATOR.

fail, as regularly as you make your Sign of the Cross."

I said nothing, but was intensely surprised. Here, I thought, is a man, a singing-master, whom I did not suppose to be very religious, but who makes the Sign of the Cross every day, whilst I have never made it once in my life. What, then, must this Catholic religion be?

Among the pieces he gave me to learn was an *Ave Maria* of his own composition. This *Ave* was really a prayer to the Blessed Virgin, and I sang it with all my heart.

Meantime the Oxford Movement went on increasing every day. We were constantly hearing that such and such a clergyman, or such and such a lady or young girl, had become a Catholic. My poor father was very angry when he heard of these conversions, and warned us that any child of his daring to become a Catholic would be sent away without pity, and never received at home again.

In spite of all this, I longed with all my might to know what Catholic teaching really was. Grace was doubtless at work, drawing me towards the Truth.

One day, in a tract written purposely to demonstrate the errors of "Popery," I found the profession of faith which converts are required to make, kneeling before the altar, when they are received into the Church. "Here, then," I said to myself, "I have the Catholic doctrine." I read it attentively, resolving to examine and question it, my

Protestant Bible in hand. Many hours of a night did I spend in reasoning out all that I found there, with the result that I admitted the truth of the dogmas of Rome, without ever having seen either a Catholic book or a Catholic priest.

For the Eucharist, I found in the sixth chapter of St. John the evident proof of the Church's doctrine of the Real Presence, because Our Lord declares in the most positive manner : " My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed : He who eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood dwelleth in Me, and I in him."

For the Infallibility of the Church, I found the promise of Our Lord to St. Peter that the gates of Hell shall never prevail against her ; and I reflected that if the Church can have erred in her teaching, then Our Lord's promise has failed.

As to the *cultus* of the Blessed Virgin, is it not contained in the salutation of the Angel Gabriel, " Hail, full of grace !" and in the words, " The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee ; therefore, that Holy One that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God " ? It seemed to me that all that has been written or said in praise of the Blessed Virgin can never equal these words, and thus I have never had any hesitation in praying to her.

Here, again, whilst my mind was at work, so was my imagination. There is something so sweet and poetical in the *cultus* of the Blessed Virgin, that this,

as well as the splendour of the Catholic ritual, attracted me towards the Truth. Notwithstanding all this, I was very much in love with the world—balls, dinners, concerts, and suchlike delights.

I was eighteen years old, and about to make my début in Society. My mother therefore took me with her to London to be presented to the Queen.

This was, of course, my first “season,” and I enjoyed it immensely. I went much into Society, and was charmed with its pleasures and amusements, which I entered into with all the zest imaginable. And yet I was always pursued by the thought of Catholicism, and determined, if ever I met a Catholic priest, to speak to him.

During the whole time we were in Town I continued to attend Mr. Bennett’s church, and there I heard sermons which gave me an ever-increasing desire to embrace the Catholic Faith.

When the “season” was over, I returned with my mother into the country, and soon afterwards accompanied both my parents on a visit to my grandfather at Rhydd Court. This is charmingly situated in a lovely part of the country, and on all sides of it one could take long and delightful walks. I was left perfectly free to go about wherever I liked, all the more so because, in so doing, I was almost always within the boundaries of my grandfather’s property.

Now, our nearest neighbour was a Catholic, and our two families, having lived in their respective



CATHOLIC CHURCH AND MONASTERY BUILT BY THE ELDER PUGIN FOR MR. HORNGOLD  
IN BLACKMORE PARK, HANLEY, WORCESTERSHIRE.



domains for centuries, were on terms of great intimacy. The Lechmeres and the Hornyolds had both come to England with William the Conqueror, and had always kept up their friendly relations. We still possess in the family archives documents of the time of Henry II., about 1180 or a little later,\* where the names of the two families appear side by side, and both alike figure in the annals of English history.

Mr. Hornyold had recently built a beautiful Catholic church, with a small monastery attached to it, for a few Redemptorist Fathers. The construction and consecration of this church had caused an indescribable commotion in the country, for it was the second or third Catholic church built in England since the Reformation, thanks to the abolition of the infamous Penal Laws against Catholics. Thus, when the Fathers were seen going about with their crucifix and rosary, the indignation and fury of the Protestants is not to be imagined. They wanted to banish them from England, or to be empowered to imprison them, or even to put them to death.

At that time, to become a Catholic was looked upon as a great disgrace, both for the individual and for his family.

The old Catholic families kept themselves completely apart. They were very seldom seen in Society. Under the Penal Laws, before the Bill of

\* Henry II. reigned from 1133 to 1189.

Emancipation, restoring their civil and political liberty, was passed in 1829,\* Catholics were debarred from filling any post under Government, or from being Members of Parliament. A sort of mystery brooded over them. Sometimes, in passing along the road, one might discern afar off an ancient mansion, and on asking who lived there, be told, with a gesture of horror or contempt: "Oh, it is Mr. So-and-So. He and his family are Papists!" As to their worship, many Catholics spoke only of "Going to prayers," and some remembered having been fined five pounds for having attended Mass. In short, they scarcely dared to show themselves.

There were no Catholic chapels, except in some of the old country mansions. In a few large towns a room in some Catholic house was arranged as an oratory.†

In some places people would come out of their houses to see a Catholic priest passing by, as if he were some curious animal. The Jesuits in particular were regarded as conspirators. It is difficult at the present time to realize how strong were the prejudices of those days.

Well, here I was in the country. I knew there was a Catholic church not far off, but did not know exactly in which direction. One day, in the course

\* On April 13 of that year.

† These pages on the sad state to which English Catholics were reduced recall a well-known passage in Newman's sermon, "The Second Spring," preached at Oscott, July 13, 1852.

of one of my solitary rambles, I found myself almost close to it. I was greatly agitated. Here at last, I thought, is a chance for me to see a priest, and already I asked myself, if he should convince me of the truth, what should I do? Entering the churchyard, I tried to open the door of the church. Alas! it was fast. I walked all round, but finding no other entrance, I knelt at the foot of a beautiful cross and prayed that it might be granted me to see a priest. I was trembling all the time, for my uncle, my father's brother, who was Rector of the parish, was frequently on the road, going to visit one or another of his flock. Quitting the churchyard, I looked along the road, and saw a black figure approaching. "It is a priest," I thought, and ran to meet him, until, as I drew near, I was overcome by timidity. My face was crimson from heat and shyness, and I could not utter a word. Good Brother Cenaire—for he it was—asked me if I wished to visit the church. "Oh yes," I answered, "but I dare not!" The Brother encouraged me, and as I saw no one on the road, especially not my uncle, I went with him to the church. How admirable I found it! I had never been in a Catholic church, except that of St. Nicholas at Boulogne, which I only remembered very indistinctly, and which, moreover, is not very beautiful; but this one, the chapel in Blackmore Park, was a perfect gem of Gothic architecture. The stained-glass windows, the statues of the Saints, the altars, the choir-screen, surmounted by a large

crucifix, with St. Mary and St. John, appeared to me full of beauty.

After looking at everything, I knelt down, and the good Brother, divining that I had a leaning towards Catholicism, said : " I am sure you would like to see our Father Superior." " Oh no," I answered ; " pray do not think of it ! My uncle would be furious !" But even as I spoke the Brother had disappeared, and a few seconds afterwards the venerable Father Laus, with the face of a Saint, and full of gentleness, came and took me to the monastery parlour.

In my alarm at what I was doing, my confusion at the thought of my burning face, and my state of agitation, I could not speak. He asked me who I was and what I desired. " I wish to become a Catholic." " And why ?" he inquired. " Because I am sure it is the Truth " [*sic*]. He then asked if I had studied the Catholic doctrine, and I told him how I had ascertained what was the belief of the Church of Rome.

I remember feeling rather surprised that he did not at once offer me Baptism. I was very ignorant, and had heard that Catholic priests would do anything to obtain converts, and that they received them on any sort of pretext.

The good Father simply bade me pray very much, especially when I told him that I was sure my parents would never see me again if I became a Catholic. I added that the Rector of the parish

was my father's brother, and that the brother of my mother was also a Protestant minister, that one of her first cousins was Bishop of Rochester, and that three of his sons, my cousins, were Protestant clergymen also.

He said that, cost what it might, I must save my soul ; that all the riches and honours of the world are nothing ; that we must take up the cross and follow Jesus, regardless of conditions. Finally, he gave me a book of prayers, a crucifix, and a Catechism, and I came away.

I was greatly upset. I knew that it would only be at an enormous cost if I were to become a Catholic, and yet I felt that to remain a Protestant was impossible.

I was firmly resolved to embrace the Catholic religion, but at the age of eighteen the thought of sacrificing everything, of being looked upon by all my friends and acquaintances as a self-willed girl, disobedient and ungrateful, of breaking my parents' hearts, and of incurring, together with their disgrace, the dishonour of being banished from my home, was very hard. Truly a terrible future was before me.

I had no small amount of vanity and ambition. My eldest sister had just made a splendid marriage. Her husband, an excellent young man, was heir to a large fortune, and owned princely mansions in England and Ireland. I had been brought up with the notion that it was the height of happiness to make a brilliant marriage, and I knew that my parents

desired this for me. By becoming a Catholic I must give up all thoughts of it, for among Catholics, especially in those days, there was very little chance of making what is called "a good match."

All these considerations aroused a terrible conflict in my heart. Also, I was afraid of being discovered, and that my secret should be found out.

A few days afterwards, I went again to the monastery. This time I did not see Father Laus, but Father Ludwig. He said much to me about the happiness of being a Catholic, exhorted me not to resist grace, and gave me some books. It was arranged that he should write to me, and I to him, to lay all my difficulties before him.

A few days later, my parents and I left my grandfather's house and returned to Malvern. I wrote from thence to Father Ludwig, but knew not how to obtain his answer. Never in my life had I received a letter which my mother had not seen, but it would be impossible for me to show her this. What was I to do?

We had a maid-servant who had been with us from my childhood, and who was very fond of me. I asked her if she would allow a letter to be sent to me enclosed in an envelope directed to her. "What sort of letter?" she asked. "Who is writing to you — somebody in want of money?" "No." "Then, is anyone asking you in marriage?" "Oh dear, no!" In short, as I would not tell her what the letter was about, she refused to receive it.

There was only one thing to be done—to wait for the postman, and take in all the letters. But I was terrified, for my father might any day have them all in his hands before me, and discover everything. I managed to receive the first . . . but how about the others? Father Ludwig gave me the addresses of several Catholics who were staying at Malvern for the waters. With the greatest difficulty in the world I went to see them. I felt very unhappy, and perhaps very guilty, to be acting as I was, unknown to my parents.

At the house of one of these Catholic ladies I one day met Father Ludwig. He wanted me to make my confession to him. I refused. I was tossed about by all sorts of terrors and conflicting thoughts. On the one hand, I feared lest, having once become a Catholic, I might experience disappointments; on the other, I was held back by the thought of all the temporal advantages I must sacrifice in taking this step. In short, it is impossible to describe the struggle that was going on within me.

Father Ludwig wrote me several more letters, pressing me not to delay, and saying that I was risking my soul by remaining deaf to the grace of God, Who was calling me to the Catholic Church.

All this made me so unhappy that it became impossible entirely to conceal my anxiety and trouble. The servant who, ever since I had asked her to receive a letter for me, had been watching me, remarked how much I was changed, and how often

I appeared sad and preoccupied. One evening she came to my room. "You have something on your mind," she said. "I beg you to tell me what is the matter ; otherwise, it will be my duty to speak to your mother about it." In vain I protested that I was not doing anything wrong. She insisted, and at last, fearing lest she should speak, and hoping that if she knew the truth she would say nothing, I owned to her that I wished to be a Catholic. I had scarcely said the words when she answered : "If you do not promise me to give up all thought of any such thing, I shall let your mother know of it, and that without fail, to-morrow."

My alarm and anguish may be imagined. I was wild with grief.

"If you do not promise," she resumed, "it is my duty to speak." I refused to promise, and she left me, repeating that my mother would be informed in the morning.

Were I to live a thousand years, I should never forget that day. The weather was superb. It was one of those summer days when the air is laden with the fragrance of flowers and fruits. The birds sang, and all Nature was rejoicing in the glorious sunshine. Sorrow and suffering seemed impossible when all Nature was so glad.

My father had gone into Worcester on business ; my mother was in her boudoir, attending to her correspondence. I heard the maid go in that direction, and ran upstairs to my own room, where

I waited in a state of indescribable anguish. I threw myself on my knees by the bed, but was too much agitated to be able to pray. My heart was beating so violently that I could hardly bear it.

A few moments later, and I heard my poor mother coming up to my room. She entered, weeping bitterly, in the greatest agitation. She, usually so gentle, so tender and kind, was exceedingly angry. Snatching from the wall a rosary that had been brought for me as a curiosity from Ireland, she overwhelmed me with reproaches, and with floods of tears called me a bad, perverse, and disobedient girl.

Never before had my mother been angry with me, and now I must either renounce my convictions or be looked upon by her as a wicked and disgraced child. I could do nothing but sob and weep.

She had sent a messenger to my father to tell him to come home. He came. What a fearful moment it was! Even now I cannot think of it without trembling. His anger was terrific. He called down upon me the most dreadful maledictions if I should ever dare to become a Catholic. He reproached me for my wickedness, perversity, and disobedience; made me hand over to him the books which had been given to me, and threw them into the fire, saying he hoped that if ever I became a Catholic I might burn in the fire of Hell. God gave me grace to answer: "And I, father, pray God to bless you for time and eternity."

This terrible scene, with the agitation, grief, and misery I felt, threw me into a state of nervous convulsions, which so alarmed my parents that they then endeavoured to calm me. The attack, nevertheless, lasted several hours. Next day all began over again.

At last, terrified by my father's anger, worn out by hours of agitation and anguish, and, above all, overcome by the tears and supplications of my mother, I yielded. My father insisted upon my writing to Father Ludwig and telling him that I no longer intended to become a Catholic, and that I had promised my parents to give up all thought of it.

Alas ! but what did I then know about our Faith ? I had not had time to be instructed. I was convinced in my own mind that it was the Truth, but I could not have given any reason for this conviction. After all, I might be under a delusion ; and, besides, I felt so guilty for my disobedience to my parents, and for all the distress I was causing them.

My poor father then dictated a letter, which I sent to Father Ludwig, he and my mother hoping that I had renounced my wish.

But grace was working within me. I was so intensely unhappy that it was impossible to keep my promise. After a few very sorrowful days I wrote to tell Father Ludwig that my father had obliged me to write my former letter, but that I had been greatly troubled ever since, and could not abandon my intention of becoming a Catholic.

Was I suspected? In any case, I was asked soon afterwards if I had not written, and I owned that I had. Again there was a scene of fearful anger on the part of my beloved father, and of tears and reproaches from my poor mother.

Still, I occasionally received messages or a few words from Father Ludwig, bidding me to persevere.

Very soon the longing to be a Catholic grew so strong that I felt I would willingly endure martyrdom in order to embrace the Faith. I was at the same time haunted by the fear of dying outside the Church, and wore round my neck a little silk bag containing a paper on which I had written the words: "If I die, I die a Catholic." At last I resolved to write to the Father and say that, if he would call at the house, I would declare to him, in the presence of my parents, that nothing would alter my determination.

My sister, who was married, and much older than I, had just come to stay with us, and in the evening, when we were all in the drawing-room, I heard the bell of the front-door ring. My heart beat so that I fancied those around me must hear it. I trembled with terror, guessing who it was that rang. I soon heard my father's voice speaking very wrathfully in the dining-room. No doubt Father Ludwig was there. I left the drawing-room, and heard my father saying: "She has renounced all idea of being a Catholic." I then entered the dining-room. "Father," I said, "I wish to speak to Father

Ludwig. I wish to be a Catholic!" My father dragged me out of the room, and blows rained upon me.

My father's anger was terrible. My mother and sister also reproached me bitterly for my wickedness and disobedience. I was sent to my own room, with orders not to leave it until I had made up my mind to abandon my intention.

So I went up to my room, and there I remained for a whole month. During this time my uncle, Mr. Berwick Lechmere, Rector of the parish, came to see me. He, too, bitterly reproached me, but one of his principal arguments was that I was destroying all my parents' hopes for my establishment in the world, all my own dreams of marrying well. I confess that the thought of making a brilliant marriage and having a great position in the world had great attractions for me. What dreams one has at the age of eighteen! I knew that I was not without success in Society, and also that there was the probability of a splendid marriage for me.

My uncle left with me some books containing most violent attacks against the Faith, and in particular against the Blessed Virgin. One of these books especially, with the title of *Virgin-Worship*, was full of horrible blasphemies against Our Blessed Lady. The only effect produced upon me by these books was to make me long more than ever to be a Catholic. Besides, in *Virgin-Worship* I found all the Antiphons of Our Lady, and these struck me

as being so beautiful that I made of them a sort of "Little Office," and the *Salve Regina* has from that time been one of my best-loved prayers.

My poor mother laid hands on my "Little Office" and tore it up; then, perceiving that there was no hope of inducing me to read the books, she took them away. The days I then spent were indescribably melancholy. I believe that I could have joyfully mounted the scaffold or gone to the stake, if only on that condition I might become a Catholic. At the same time my mind was tormented by doubts. Was I right? Was the Catholic religion the true one? Who knows whether, after causing so much suffering to my parents, I might not find myself in the wrong? I cannot describe what I suffered. Then my visions of the future would persistently recur. My sister had made a very rich marriage, and I hoped to do the same, having a large household, country-houses, handsome equipages, and everything on a grand scale; but if I became a Catholic, all these dreams were at an end. I knew, also, that I was regarded by everyone as an obstinate and disobedient girl. I was told plainly that I was going straight to Hell, doomed to perdition, and was breaking the hearts of my parents.

I prayed, but even in my prayers I had no peace. I dared not use Catholic devotions, lest I should be doing wrong, and I did not wish to say prayers used by Protestants any more. In this I was greatly

mistaken, for of course I could say the *Pater*, the *Te Deum*, the Psalms, etc. ; but I was only eighteen, weak in disposition, deeply troubled, and alone.

From time to time my sister came to see me, my mother also, but I dreaded their visits.

Sometimes I was allowed to walk a little in the garden. There, seated on a bench, I used to spend hours looking at the little Catholic church in the distance, reflecting that all my happiness was there. One afternoon I thought I would go to the monastery of Benedictine nuns at Stanbrook,\* which I could see a long way off. I started for the abbey, but it was growing late. I feared lest darkness should overtake me, and that I might lose my way in the fields, so I retraced my steps.

During all these days of solitude and confinement I felt crushed by grief, fear, and something like despair.

One day my poor father came to my room at five o'clock in the morning. He bade me get up and dress, for I was to go away. I was seized with terror, for I did not know where I was going, nor was I told. I had never been away from my parents, and my grief was great. Not until I had entered the carriage was I informed of my destination. I was being sent to stay for some time with my uncle, a Protestant clergyman, who lived at Brampton Brian, in Herefordshire.

\* See Appendix C.

At the first moment this news consoled me. I was fond of my uncle, aunt, and cousins ; also I was glad of any change, after being so long in my room.

As I was leaving, my poor mother and sister put into my hands letters which seemed to rend my heart. Even now I cannot think of them without weeping. And yet, although I felt that I might be blameworthy, and was full of grief for the distress I caused my parents, and all my people, something still stronger told me that I could not renounce my resolution.

Nevertheless, I was exceedingly unhappy. My parents were ordering me away from home, and my self-esteem was keenly wounded by all the criticisms I incurred. Worse than all was the fact that I knew so little how to answer all their objections and arguments. I was full of doubts, perplexity, and trouble. The anguish I endured was indescribable.

I remained a month at my uncle's house. If my poor parents had wished to deepen my convictions in favour of Catholicism, they could not have sent me to a better place. Everything there helped to confirm my belief in it. My uncle was one of those Protestant clergymen of whom at that time there were so very many—men of the world, whose chief delight was in horses, dogs, sport in general, but especially in fox-hunting. His church was in a most deplorable condition. The walls were dripping with

damp and green with mould, and the windows covered with cobwebs. The building was opened only on Sundays, and the services were dreary and cold. The hymns were sung by the discordant voices of the school-children, and the responses made in a nasal drawl by the parish clerk. It would have been hard to find anything better calculated to strengthen my desires. What a contrast was all this to what I knew of Catholic churches, with their altars, the mysterious lamp burning night and day before the Blessed Sacrament, the beautiful music, all the consolations of the sacred ordinances, the soul's peace in confession, the happiness of Holy Communion, and this poor church, so melancholy in its desolation !

One evening my cousins' tutor, a Protestant deacon, came to inform my uncle that an old woman, one of his parishioners, was dangerously ill, and feeling that death was near, she desired to receive the Sacrament next day.

"Impossible for me to go to her to-morrow," my uncle calmly replied. "I start at five in the morning for X——, where there is to be a meet of the hounds at seven !"

What I felt on hearing this may be imagined. Here was a poor woman, one of his own flock, on the brink of eternity, asking her pastor for the aids of religion, which he refuses to grant because he is going to a fox-hunt !

Amid this spiritual desolation I felt a daily in-

crease of faith, though I still had moments of culpable weakness.

One evening my uncle summoned me to his study, and asked me if I wished to be the cause of my mother's death, assuring me that I should kill her if I persisted in my project.

My mother's health was very delicate, and I knew that she had suffered much from the anguish I had caused her. The thought that I might be the cause of her death was unspeakably distressing, and I ended by promising to take no step until I should be twenty-one years of age. I wrote a most affectionate letter to my parents, which in some measure reconciled them to me.

Shortly afterwards my uncle and aunt Shirreff invited me to stay with them. My uncle, who was an Admiral, had just been appointed to the important post of Superintendent of the Dockyard at Portsmouth. I was delighted to go, for he and my aunt and cousins were very kind to me.

Alas ! I had scarcely been a week at Portsmouth before my uncle became seriously ill. The Queen had come for the launching of a man-of-war. The weather was horrible. Etiquette demanded that, in presence of the Queen, officers must be in full dress, in thin shoes, and without their cloaks. Rain fell in torrents. My uncle was wet through and chilled to the bone. He took cold, and on returning in the evening from a grand dinner, was ill and shivering with fever. At first his state was not thought

alarming, but on the eighth day this man, a powerful Colossus, who seemed to defy death to touch him, departed for the world to come, without any of the succours of religion. Without Sacraments, without priest, without prayers, his soul had passed into eternity. What was its state? This terrible question was constantly present to my mind, and overwhelmed me—the more so because I loved my uncle very dearly, as one loves when one is young, so that naturally I was the more affected.

And again the thought that I, too, might die out of the Catholic Church took possession of me.

I felt ill, and the days of mourning, so terrible in England, frightened me. The body was kept for a week, and, according to custom, all the shutters were closed, the curtains drawn, and the darkened rooms lighted only with candles and lamps. During this time the corpse, in its coffin, remains shut up in a room, where no one enters to watch or pray. This was the first time I had seen anyone die, and I was in a state of nervous and mental distress, which made me see death all around me.

Those were truly days of fear and desolation. At that time I would certainly have accepted martyrdom if only I might be a Catholic; for this I would have gone joyfully to the stake or the scaffold. My nerves were so strained that I seemed to feel nothing. It occurred to me that if I were ill, I might be allowed to make my abjuration.

The day after the funeral I set out with my poor

aunt for London, where one of her married daughters lived. There the dull and dreary winter weather, the terrible shock of my uncle's death, the ever-increasing struggle in my soul, affected me to such a degree that I could neither eat, sleep, nor do anything. I remained whole days with a book in my hand, but not reading a line, a prey to sadness and crushing depression.

I sometimes thought of going to one of the Catholic churches in London, and making my abjuration, but the remembrance of my aunt's affliction and the additional pain I should cause her stopped me. At last I wrote a few lines to Father Ludwig, telling him that I was in London, and that I daily walked for an hour in front of my aunt's house. One day I saw him when I was out, but dared not speak to him, fearing almost lest the very paving-stones might betray me, for I was so closely watched. The Father slipped into my hand a few words in writing, exhorting me not to delay any longer before taking the decisive step. What distress I felt on reading these few lines, entreating me not to risk the loss of my soul by resisting grace, and naming a day for my abjuration and a church where I was to make it ! Whilst reading this letter I turned and saw—my father ! Happily he did not see me. I was seized with terror, and turned into another street to calm myself before meeting him. Hiding the letter and a book which accompanied it in the folds of my dress, I then went to meet him. Business had

brought him to London, and he was coming to see me. He proposed that we should take a walk, and we went into the Park. What a walk that was ! I was so unhappy and felt so guilty, for I knew that I was unceasingly thinking of becoming a Catholic, and that I was hiding it from my poor father. . . . On the other hand, it seemed to be only my duty to follow my convictions.

During our walk it was a most singular fact, considering how few Catholic priests there were then, that we met several of them. I have always thought that God permitted this to encourage me, for although I did not know them, yet the sight of a priest who had, as I knew, power to give absolution and to say Mass was a consolation to my poor heart.

This melancholy walk came to an end at last. My father left by the evening train, and I was able to retire to my room and read Father Ludwig's letter. It only added to my distress. I would have given my life to embrace the true Faith, but had not courage to face the anger, still less the grief, of my parents.

My health was seriously affected, and at last I became so ill that my cousin sent for a medical celebrity to come and see me. He said that calm and tranquillity were absolutely necessary for me, and that without delay ; otherwise my mind would be unhinged, and I should become insane.

He spoke so decidedly that my mother wrote to

say that I might do whatever would make me calm and happy. I answered immediately that the only thing that could make me calm and happy was to become a Catholic. The next letter from my parents informed me that they would never allow me to abjure Protestantism until I had been well examined and instructed by a Protestant clergyman.

This was what I dreaded more than anything. I was conscious of never having studied the doctrines of the Roman Church, and how could I argue with a learned man? But my parents were very determined on this point, though, for my part, I would have done anything to be allowed a little peace. I hoped, however, to make it evident to the Protestant minister that my resolution was irrevocable. Finally, it was settled that I should see Mr. Bennett, the clergyman of the Puseyite church of St. Paul's, Knightsbridge—the same who had admitted me to Confirmation when I was sixteen.

He came, therefore, and was so kind, speaking to me so gently and calmly, that his visits were almost a consolation after the terrible scenes of anger I had gone through and the cruel things that had been said to me. But he quickly discovered how ignorant I was, and how little able to answer his arguments. In fact, I had not much to say in answer to them, and also I felt too timid to dispute with him.

He made me read several books full of falsehoods against the Church. They were powerless to convince me.

To everything he said, and to all the affirmations of his books, I had but one general reply :

“ If the Church has erred in her doctrine, the promise of Jesus Christ is null ; the gates of Hell have prevailed against her, and Our Lord is not the Son of God.”

Thanks to this one simple argument, I remained absolutely convinced, amid all the storms, doubts, and temptations that assailed me, that the Catholic Church alone was the true one, that there could be no other, and that in her teaching she could not err. Nevertheless, under Mr. Bennett's influence, I decided to wait until I should be of age. In fact, I could not legally make my abjuration until then.

I resolved, therefore, to submit myself to Mr. Bennett's guidance. His kindness and gentleness won my affection and respect, and I preferred having one adviser rather than a multitude of counsellors. Besides, by placing myself under his direction, I escaped the entreaties and remonstrances of other persons, friends or acquaintances.

I assiduously attended the services at his church. He even induced me to go to confession to him. I thought that I might possibly find peace for my soul by conforming to all the practices of the Ritualists.

It was arranged, therefore, that I should go to confession, and the day was fixed. I have never

forgotten that day, nor how my heart beat when eleven o'clock struck—the hour I was to present myself—and Mr. Bennett made me a sign to go into the sacristy. He was seated, wearing a surplice and a violet stole. In front of him was a table, at the other end of which I knelt down. What was my surprise when he made me say all the prayers which I had seen in the book formerly given me by Father Ludwig, and which I knew by heart! I saw that he had cut out these prayers and pasted them in a book of his own, which he made use of when hearing confessions. Mine chiefly related to the great sin which, according to him, I had committed by wishing to separate myself from the Church in which I had been brought up, and my disobedience to my parents. When I had finished, he made me read the Protestation of St. Francis of Sales, which I knew was also borrowed from the Catholic book of prayers called *The Garden of the Soul*.

He set me a penance. As for absolution, he declared that he could not give it me. The Bishop of London alone had power to absolve me.

My penance was to rise at five in the morning during the whole of Lent, and to fast during all that time until six in the evening. I was also to say certain prayers.

All the time I was making my confession Mr. Bennett was looking at me, as if he could read the very depths of my soul. I was trembling with fear

and emotion, and, far from finding peace, I felt very small consolation in this ceremony.

I told Mr. Bennett that it was impossible for me not to believe in Purgatory, and in the efficacy of prayers for the departed. He answered: "You may believe in the existence of a Purgatory—that is to say, of an intermediate place between earth and Heaven—and pray for those who are in it." Now, on the following Sunday he said in the pulpit: "There is no such place as Purgatory, however consoling it might be to believe in it."

He insisted on my giving up praying to the Blessed Virgin, saying that to pray to her was sinful.

The confession was ended. The absolution, as I have said, was to be given me by the Bishop of London a few days later. I returned home very depressed, very discouraged, and began my penance.

I hoped by suffering and mortification of the body to obtain peace of mind. During the first three days of my fast I took *nothing at all*. I was so overwrought, my mental suffering was so great, that the sufferings of the body passed unheeded.

At last the day came when Mr. Bennett took me to the Bishop of London, who was to absolve me from the heinous sin of having wished to discard Protestantism.

I believe the good Bishop was sufficiently embarrassed, for he was no Ritualist. He did not appear to have a very exalted notion of his power

to absolve, and for my part I do not know that I had much belief in it either ; but I would have done no matter what to obtain a little repose and peace of mind.

Besides, as I have said before, I reflected, supposing, after all, that I should be mistaken, and that, once in the Catholic Church, I should find nothing but disillusion ! Doubtless it was the Evil One who suggested these fears. Many persons also had told me that more than one convert had met with nothing but bitter disappointment, and regretted the step they had taken.

The following week I left London with my mother, and returned to the country. There I kept Lent in the manner Mr. Bennett had enjoined, eating nothing until six o'clock in the evening, and then most of the time nothing but potatoes and bread—never meat.

I went regularly to the services, and sometimes even to “the Sacrament.” I read the books of Keble and Manning, who were at that time very hostile to the Church. I wrote to Mr. Bennett and put before him all my doubts. I had, besides, many other books to read—he had laid strict injunctions upon me to do so—amongst others, one that he himself had written, in which he exposed the so-called errors of the Church of Rome—a tissue of falsehoods against the true Faith.

I continued to correspond with him for six months, but my Catholic convictions deepened every day.

At last I felt that I could no longer receive "the Sacrament" according to the Protestant rite. Also, I was very unwell, my health was in a very precarious state, and I suffered from fearful headaches.

I had lost all faith in Protestantism, and finally wrote to Mr. Bennett to say (as I had said before) : " If I am to be convinced that the Roman Church has erred in her teaching, then I no longer believe in anything ; for the promise of Jesus Christ would have failed, and He would then not be the Son of God."

It was a terrible trial, no longer to be conscientiously able to accompany my parents to receive "the Sacrament." They went regularly on the first Sunday of the month, and each time I brought forward some pretext for not going to church—either a headache or some other reason. It was a real torture to me, for my refusal to go proved that my convictions were unchanged. Then followed violent reproaches—excessive anger on the part of my father, tears and lamentations from my mother.

So dreadful was my poor father's fury that, although I loved him with all my heart, I trembled like a leaf when I heard his voice or step on the stairs. My mother's grief and tears were still harder to bear.

In the autumn of that year my music-master, a worthy Italian, came to stay for two months at Malvern. He gave me singing-lessons every day. He was a very good Catholic, and, whenever pos-

sible, I asked him for information about the Faith. I cannot express how useful he was to me, nor how much he encouraged me. I can still seem to hear him declare, with a strong Italian accent : “ There is no common sense in Protestantism ! ” He taught me much, and exhorted me to keep steadfast in the Faith. His own was so vivid that it gave me strength, and I wished more and more to be a Catholic. He would also describe the beautiful ceremonies of the Church, and my fondness for music, as well as my lively imagination, helped to attract me to the Truth.

And yet all this time I dared not use Catholic devotions, nor pray to the Blessed Virgin, for I thought it would be hypocrisy on my part to do so. Besides, I knew but few Catholic prayers, having had in my hands only one or two Catholic books for a very short time. Indeed, I was in a pitiable state of conflict and uncertainty. Sometimes I could have sacrificed everything to be a Catholic, while at others I shrank from taking the step, lest I should be mistaken. I was made to read books giving the experiences of certain self-styled converts, who, after entering the Church of Rome, discovered that they had been altogether deluded, were very unhappy, and after a few months or years returned, disappointed and disgusted, to Protestantism. I was told horrible things about priests and the confessional ; every effort was made to shake my convictions, and I was persecuted by the visits of

ministers and other persons with the same end in view. At this time I had a correspondence with Mr. Keble, the author of the celebrated *Christian Year*, but his letters did not succeed in convincing me. On the contrary, some of his arguments seemed to me weak, and others even absurd.

In fact, all these visits from different clergymen, who came, as I knew, only to utter falsehoods, became so insupportable that I declared to my mother that, although I would see as many of these parsons as she desired, and that they might talk to me for hours at a time if it so pleased them, I would not answer them a single word. This put an end to their persistence, but I was regarded as utterly wicked and obstinate, and, amongst other terrible denunciations, I was assured that I was going straight to Hell.

All this told upon my nerves. My health suffered seriously, and I was subject to frightful headaches. At one time I was so wretched that I endeavoured to stifle all religious feeling in my heart, to become indifferent, and give myself up to as much amusement as possible.

During this time I received several offers of marriage. One of these, from an excellent and charming young man, of great personal distinction, was particularly advantageous. He was also wealthy, and apparently very much in love with me. But I declared my intention of becoming a Catholic as soon as I was twenty-one, and that if ever I married

and had children I should require them all to be brought up in the Catholic Faith. As he refused his consent to this arrangement, I entirely gave up all projects of marriage.

But my years of waiting were drawing to a close. I attained the age of twenty-one, and must take the decisive step, though it was difficult to know how I was to set about it.

In the spring of that year I went on a visit to friends in London, where my mother joined me in June. Towards the end of her visit I spoke to her of all the things that I had so much at heart. I said the time was come for me to act upon my resolution, that I had fully decided to enter the Catholic Church, and asked to whom she and my father would wish me to address myself. She replied that the only priest in whom they had confidence was Dr. Wiseman, who was then Vicar-Apostolic, and subsequently Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster.

I asked my mother if she would allow me to be taken to his house in her carriage, or if her maid might accompany me thither. She refused both, nor yet would she permit any Catholic to come to her house to fetch me, nor that any of our friends should take me to Dr. Wiseman. What was to be done? Never in my life had I gone alone in any public conveyance, and was afraid of doing so. I wrote, therefore, to Dr. Wiseman, stating my difficulties, and begging him to be so kind as to send

someone with a carriage to call for me at Farrant's Hotel. In answer to my request I received from him a most kind letter, saying that an elderly lady of his acquaintance, Miss Foxhall, would come and call for me.

On the day named I went to the hotel agreed upon, and was told that Miss Foxhall had been, but not finding me there, had gone away again. I was dismayed. How could I possibly find her among the thousands of carriages and vehicles of every description passing at every moment? I was very sorrowfully returning to the house where my mother was staying, when I caught sight of a white-haired old lady in a very humble kind of conveyance. I stopped her. "Are you Miss Foxhall?" "Can you be Miss Lechmere?" she asked in return. "Yes, I am!" And I hastened to join her. Soon after, we were at Golden Square, where Dr. Wiseman then lived. He received me as a father receives his child, and after some explanations on both sides, he said that he had decided to send me to Clapham, to a Miss Prestwick, and that Father Ludwig would go to her house to receive my abjuration. It was also settled that Miss Foxhall should call and take me on the day my mother left London.

Never—no, never—shall I forget that day! My mother was the first to leave. When she bade me farewell I really thought she would have died of grief. It was appalling, heart-breaking, to see her. Half an

hour later Miss Foxhall came, and took me to the convent of which Miss Prestwick was the Superior.

I asked myself what was to become of me. I knew that my parents would never suffer me to return home again. I did not know whether they would make me some small allowance to live upon, and my whole fortune consisted of the three shillings and sixpence in my pocket. But the thought that I was about to become a Catholic filled me with so much joy that I could not be anxious about anything else. With St. Francis of Assisi, I said to myself, "If my parents will see me no more, the Lord will not abandon me"; and I remembered the words of the Psalm: "*When my father and my mother forsake me, the Lord taketh me up.*"

Miss Prestwick received me most kindly, and another lady, Miss Thornton, gave me some valuable instruction in Catholic doctrine.

Father Ludwig came to see me on the day of my arrival. At last I could speak to him freely, and I was so happy that I forgot the terrible suffering of those last days spent with my poor mother. This was June 11, the Feast of St. Barnabas, "the Son of Consolation," and truly I was much consoled. It was settled that I was to begin my general confession. On Friday I was to make my abjuration, and on Saturday, Feast of St. Basil, my First Communion.

This, my first confession to a Catholic priest, was a very different thing from my confession to Mr. Bennett. In spite of the humiliation, what comfort

there is in confessing to a priest ! What kindness and gentleness on his part, and at the same time with what authority he speaks ! And then, when the absolution is given, one has the certainty that one's sins are blotted out.

On the Friday, veiled and dressed in white, I made my abjuration, and was conditionally baptized. My godparents, Mr. and Mrs. Boschetti-Thea, were excellent Catholics.

On Saturday, the 14th, I made my First Communion, and with ineffable joy received for the first time my Lord and Saviour.

I had never been at any Catholic service except when a child at Boulogne, and when I went into the Catholic chapel at Brighton, understanding nothing of what I saw. How sublime I found the words of the Mass, and in the evening how admirable the rite of Benediction ! I was filled with delight, so keenly did I enjoy the ceremonies and Offices of the Church. Even now, after forty-eight years, I never weary of the beauties of the ritual and the symbolism of the ceremonies.

As one of our English writers, Lord Macaulay, says, in a celebrated essay on Ranke's *History of the Popes* : " If the Catholic Church were a human instead of a Divine institution, it is the most beautiful, powerful, magnificent, and complete that the world has ever seen."\*

\* For the passage in Macaulay's Essay to which these words are probably intended to refer, see Appendix D.

This is the testimony of a Protestant, but one who was liberal-minded enough to appreciate the Catholic Church.

The symbolism of every movement of the priest during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and of the sacred vestments, all help to raise the soul to God, and impress it with the marvellous mysteries of the Faith. The words also of the Mass are so sublime.

Immediately after my abjuration I wrote to my parents. Their letters, full of the bitterest reproaches and distressing expressions of anger and grief, continued to be a severe trial to me, and one which was frequently renewed; but all my sadness was surpassed by daily increasing joy.

I remained at the convent for about a month, and during that time lived upon alms. Afterwards I went on a visit to my godparents. They wished me to accompany them to Belgium, but my parents refused their consent to this arrangement. I then went to stay with some Protestant friends who were much attached to me, and of whom one in particular was truly like a sister.

My parents sent me a little money, and I went with these friends to Boulogne-sur-Mer, where I remained three months. There I became acquainted with the Abbé Leuillieux, afterwards Archbishop of Chambéry, but at that time a young curate at St. Nicholas. He always took a paternal interest in

me, and I have ever felt most grateful for his kindness.

At the end of three months my father came for me, and we returned together to England, but he would not allow me to go home to Rhydd Court. I went, therefore, to stay with several Catholic friends, and then to board and lodge with an elderly spinster, an excellent Catholic, but not at all of my own social position, and there I was anything but happy.

At the end of a year, however, I was again received into my own family, and was allowed entire freedom to practise my religion on condition that I did not attempt to convert others. I could attend Mass, but I had to walk for an hour and a half both in going and returning. I went very often, and during Lent almost daily. In order to avoid difficulties in Lent, I kept abstinence every day when at home ; but I sometimes spent that season abroad, or at the house of some Catholic friend, and was thus able to attend the services.

I still had many struggles to maintain and many painful moments. Horrible things were told me against the Catholic Church, her priests, and her teaching. Certain neighbours of ours said the most insulting things to me, and there were days when I suffered very much ; but I never had a doubt, never a regret, for having embraced the Truth, although parents and friends were all against me, and during eight years, until the time of my marriage, my inter-

course with those most dear to me was frequently strained and painful.\*

The worst trial I ever experienced after my conversion was at the time of my poor father's almost sudden death. When we were all kneeling around his coffin, my mother, brother, and sister implored me to return to Protestantism. It was a dreadful moment. Never will that scene be effaced from my memory or from my heart.

In his will, my father disinherited me, leaving me in charge of my brother, who was to make me a very small allowance. Nevertheless, a paper was found by which he authorized my brother to give me the same amount of dowry as my sister in the event of my marriage.

The year after my father's death I received another offer of marriage from a Protestant, but, as I could not be satisfied that he would allow me to practise my religion, or bring up our children as Catholics, I refused him.

Two years afterwards I married M. d'Arras, a Catholic, full of faith, and devoted to the cause of the Pope and King.

Such is the story of my conversion. In relating it I perceive how blameworthy and weak I was in yielding to the insistence of my parents, and telling

\* I wish to say at once that this trial was but temporary. Thank God, the most affectionate union subsequently existed between the convert and all her own people, as the succeeding chapters of this little book will testify.

them that I renounced my convictions, when I could not conscientiously do so. Doubtless I did not pray enough, but they only who have travelled by the same road can form any idea of the struggle which takes place in the heart and soul of those who wish to become Catholics.

There is the grief of making one's parents suffer, the dread of illusion, and lest, after causing so much distress to friends and relations, so many heart-aches, the snapping of so many ties, one may find oneself mistaken. Such frightful accusations are made on all sides against priests, convents, the confessional, etc., and to these calumnies, suggested by Satan, one cannot reply for lack of instruction and of books.

Undoubtedly, when one is once safe in the Church, all fears vanish. But I had never read (and had hardly seen) a Catholic book before my reception into it. *Then*, it is true, wondrous things were unveiled to my soul. I have always said that the Catholic Faith is one of those sources of heartfelt joy which spring up with a continual freshness, and never grow less.

Every time that one goes to confession, even when it costs one much to do so, one experiences an increase of peace and happiness, and realizes afresh what a joy it is to be a Catholic.

I have suffered much in the course of my life, but I can affirm that, except for some few passing temptations, I have never had a doubt, and am more and

more thankful to God for the great grace of being a member of the Catholic Church.

The farther one advances in life towards eternity, the greater is the happiness of being in the Truth. The years of eternity will not be long enough in which to thank God for a grace so great that it opens to us the gates of Heaven.

Perhaps the joy of being a Catholic cannot be summed up better than in the words of an old Irishwoman. Being tempted in her poverty by presents of tea, meat, and other provisions from a Protestant minister, she was persuaded for a time to attend his "place of worship." But, falling ill, and being in danger of death, she sent for the priest, made her confession and her peace with God. The minister, hearing of this, came and reproached her severely for her relapse into "Popery." "Ah, sir," she said, "the Protestant religion may be a good one to live in, but it's the very divil of a one to die in!"

Those who have seen Protestants die, and have noticed how few are the consolations attending their last moments, can understand the difference there is between their death-bed and that of Catholics, with all the graces of the Sacraments, the prayers said by their children and friends, the final absolution given by the priest, and all the succours of our admirable religion. It is then that one can realize the inestimable grace and happiness one has received from God in the knowledge of the Truth.

For my part, I thank Him every day of my life for my conversion, while awaiting the day when I hope, by His infinite mercy, to go and offer Him my thanksgivings, praise, and adoration in His Paradise, and to sing unending alleluias for His ineffable grace in calling me into His Church, and giving me children who are consecrated to His service, working daily for Him and for His poor. Is not this more, much more, than the "hundredfold" promised to those who have given up anything for Him? and is it not a foretaste of the happiness of Heaven?

LOUISE D'ARRAS.

AIX-EN-PROVENCE, June 13, Feast of  
St. Anthony of Padua and St. Basil  
—forty-seventh anniversary of my  
abjuration in 1850, and of my First  
Communion, June 14, 1850.

## IV

### MADAME D'ARRAS

SIR EDMUND LECHMERE notes in his "Journal," under the date of July 26, 1849, a visit from his son-in-law and his eldest daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Shirley, who introduced to him a young Frenchman with whom they had become acquainted at the house of their cousin, Lord Ferrers. This was Lambert-Louis d'Arras, the son and grandson of naval officers "who had fought valiantly against England." Sir Edmund adds that "M. d'Arras is entirely devoted to the cause of his religion [the Roman Catholic], and to that of his rightful Sovereign, the Duc de Bordeaux. He has the grand manners of the *ancien régime*, with much modesty and reserve, but without any affectation."

Miss Lechmere, who at that time had not been received into the Church, but had already suffered much for her faith, little dreamt that Providence destined her to become one day—about ten years later—the wife of this young Frenchman; but, she says, the thought that this visitor, so much esteemed by her father, was a Catholic was very consoling to her.

Indeed, notwithstanding an education which was not altogether free from Jansenistic ideas, Lambert-Louis d'Arras was profoundly religious. God had endowed him also with natural refinement and delicate affections. Low and debasing thoughts and views would have been singularly repellent to him. His intimacy at that time with that grand Christian, Comte de Nicolay, was at the same time a guarantee of his sentiments, and a powerful influence in strengthening them. Another of his characteristics was his love of the poor, whom he regarded with mingled affection and respect. Old people in particular were objects of his attentions.

Many a time when we were children have we seen him on great festivals, with other gentlemen of Boulogne, girt with a white apron and serving, with beaming countenance, the "good old folks" of the Little Sisters of the Poor, as they by preference applied to him to refill their glasses to the brim.

But this love of his for the poor dated from long before. He sometimes told us of one of his pleasures when, as a youth, he stayed for the first time in London. In some quarter or other of the great city there were certain shops where one could purchase "a cup of tea and an oyster" for one halfpenny. He loved to haunt these regions in cold and foggy weather, and when any old man in rags, or some old Irish-woman, her bonnet adorned with draggled feathers,

passed that way, and looked longingly at the teapot as it stood steaming by the oyster-barrel, he would go to them, and offer to "stand treat." Paddy or Biddy would look up in surprise and delight, and thank their benefactor with a hearty "God bless your honour!" And he would pass on, glad to have made another person happy.

All this was the outcome of a kind heart and a spirit of native benevolence, but this sentiment was raised to a higher level by the spirit of faith. My father often had on his lips the words of Holy Writ, "Alms delivereth from death, and the same is that which purgeth away sins" (Tob. xii. 9), and to excuse himself on certain occasions when he had given too ready credence to a beggar's story, he would say: "I would rather be deceived now and again by an undeserving person than risk refusing Our Lord."

The faith which showed him Jesus Christ beneath the tatters of the poor had accustomed him to see Peter in the white robe of the Pope, Sovereign of Rome, or prisoner. With what filial affection, with what profound reverence, he regarded him! and with what a thrilling tone he would repeat the words of Christ—"Tu es Petrus"!

We have already seen, and we shall see again, how fully my mother could appreciate this love of the Faith, the poor, and the Pope.

The Providence which had destined her to spend nearly all her life in France had also, from her youth

upwards, put into her heart a special affection for that country. This is how she speaks of it :

In a diary kept during a journey in 1854, as soon as she is within sight of Boulogne, Miss Lechmere "joyfully salutes the coast of 'La Belle France,' which is now the most Catholic country in the world."

And a few pages farther on : "How I love 'Beautiful France' ! Truly I believe that no Frenchwoman can love her country more than I ! And, then, what a delicious feeling it is to find oneself again in a Catholic country, among people who share one's belief, who can sympathize with one's sentiments, and who all pray at the same altar !"

To understand how strong was this last consideration in the mind of the young convert, we must recall some of the details given in the narrative of her conversion—details more fully described in the beautiful book of M. Thureau-Dangin, and in the *Conferences* of M. l'Abbé Guibert—of the pitiable state to which the churches in England were then reduced.

A page of her "Journal" in 1852 already expresses her joy at finding herself in a Catholic country. Although this does not relate to France, I quote it as evidence of her feelings. Miss Lechmere had just arrived with her father at Antwerp.

"We went to the Cathedral, which, although it was already late in the morning, was still open. Numbers of the faithful were scattered about the

sacred edifice, hearing the last Mass, praying at Our Lady's altar, or at that of some other Saint whose intercession they desired, or whom their devotion led them particularly to honour. Who can express the feelings of a Catholic on entering one of these noble buildings, especially an English Catholic and a convert? Who can tell the joy it is to feel that, even in a foreign land, the church one enters is 'our' church, that the Faith of these worshippers is our own, that the Holy Sacrifice is offered for us? Who can describe the happiness of knowing that while the Holy Sacrifice is being offered at Antwerp the very same is offered on many a poor altar in England? Surely nothing is more sublime than this unity of faith in which people of all nations meet in prayer and adoration, without understanding one another's language, or perhaps without knowing whence they come."

We have seen with what affection Miss Lechmere in 1854 regarded the country which was called "The Eldest Daughter of the Church." It may be imagined what this sentiment became when, four years later, her marriage made "La Belle France" the land of her adoption.

One day when she came to see me at Enghien, in Belgium, I proposed an excursion to Waterloo. She refused. "The sight of a battlefield," she said, "where France was beaten, would make my heart ache. I would rather not go."

How she suffered during the sad war of 1870!

When she heard, while in England, of the disaster of Sedan, she owned that she spent the whole day in weeping and praying.

Perhaps I may be allowed to relate an incident which procured for her "national" *amour-propre* the gratification of a little revenge.

In February, 1871, after the armistice, the Prussians came to occupy St. Valery-sur-Somme, where we lived, and we had to lodge a number of them.

After the first or second day these men began to be exacting. My mother declared to them in German that they would gain nothing by acting in this manner. They answered her very disrespectfully, and, with a threatening air, began to adjust their bayonets to the end of their rifles. "You will hear something more about this," said my mother, upon which they laughed mockingly at her. My mother went to the Colonel. He was polite, but frowned when she began to make her representations. She observed, not without some amusement, that he was becoming more and more disagreeable. When she had finished her complaints she presented him with a letter. The effect was comical, and at the same time dramatic. In this letter, H.R.H. the Princess Alice of England, whom my mother had met a few months before at Rhydd Court, authorized her to "make use of her name," if she ever had any difficulty with the German forces.

A quarter of an hour afterwards, a sort of Sub-Lieutenant appeared at our house, and, to our

patriotic delight as children, turned all the men out, accompanying his guttural commands with gestures that did not tend to soften their purport.

The men were replaced by some brave Catholics from Rhineland, who gave us no cause for complaint.

The persecutions of recent years, which affected her so closely, seem to have more particularly grieved her because France, "this so Catholic nation," was becoming estranged from God, and debased.

"I am extraordinarily depressed. What is going on in France distresses me to that degree that I no longer take pleasure in anything."\*

And in another letter: "I am so distressed at what is being done in France. I very often offer my life to God. If He would accept it, to put an end to this frightful persecution, how happy I should be! All these events completely detach me from life. Even Rome has lost its charm, and so much sadness is telling upon my health. I suffer much, and am very infirm."

Again she writes: "Oh, how I love France! If only I could restore religion there by being shot or guillotined, I would lay down my life without a moment's hesitation. But the Sacred Heart will save us, I am sure!"

As we perceive, her sadness does not exclude hope, and everything which tends to keep hope alive is eagerly welcomed.

"I fear," she writes, "that God may punish

\* See Appendix E.

France before He raises her again, but I think that if it be part of His plan to restore the temporal power of the Pope, France will be chosen to carry His design into execution."

In the same letter she expresses her joy at the progress made with the cause of Jeanne d'Arc.

Another day she writes : " I am very, very sorrowful at times. I ought to have more confidence, but the good and dear Jesus is *sleeping* a long time, and the barque seems sinking. I ask St. Peter to awaken Him, and Jesus perhaps reproaches me for my want of faith."

On learning the details of a beautiful Eucharistic festival at Boulogne, she writes : " It is magnificent ! That does good. And then the numerous confessions ! Bravo ! what happiness ! I think God's hour is about to strike. I seem to hear it sounding faintly in the distance, but it will surely come. God cannot abandon France, for if there are some people who hate Him, how many are there who love Him, and have consecrated their lives to Him !"

Another time she writes to Sœur Thérèse de Jésus (her daughter Marguerite, a Carmelite nun, exiled to Rome) : " I have just been reading, in the *Semaine Religieuse* of Cambrai, an article which is as balm to my heart. The Holy Father writes : ' Never talk of the ruin, or rather the annihilation, of France in the world. France is necessary to us. Other nations are excellent : they have their value and their merit ; but France is our resource. She carries

Jesus Christ to the ends of the world.'” And the letter ended with these words : “In spite of everything, I love France with all my heart.”

“ I am very pleased,” she wrote to me, “ that you are writing the Life of Alexis Villié. People who speak ill of France should read these lives of young Frenchmen. They would then know better what the French spirit is.”

Yet one more instance will show all the delicacy of her affection for France. Notwithstanding the odium which my mother felt was thrown upon the hapless country of her adoption by the Masonic Government, she said to Sœur Thérèse de Jésus : “ It would make me very happy to see old England once more, but, to own the truth, I dread hearing France spoken against, and I have not the courage.”

## V

### OUR MOTHER

FROM the reminiscences recorded in the foregoing chapter, the influence exercised by our father and mother on the education of the four children God had given them may be readily imagined, an influence which had its source in the lively faith they knew so well how to inspire by the force of their own example.

Here I wish to speak only of my mother. Need I say that the knowledge of all she had suffered in order to enter the Church was in itself more eloquent than any words? And this remembrance was often revived, simply by the contrast of her actual position with that of the rest of her family on the other side of the Channel. At times, too, the Will of some relation in England was opened, in which the name of the convert was passed over in silence, or else she was to receive a sum so ridiculously small as to accentuate the humiliating exception. And we always saw her accept the trial with her customary kindness and courage.

Together with this continuous and almost unconscious influence, another was exercised, which was more direct.



MADAME D'ARRAS.



“Thanks to mamma’s delicate tact,” writes Sœur Thérèse de Jésus, “her habitual elevation of mind, and the discretion and good sense which characterized her piety, our Christian education was the work of every moment. She had no fixed hour for her instructions, but she let slip no opportunity, without ever overdoing or wearying us, or wanting to do everything at once. We felt that we were guided without ever ceasing to feel that we were free.”

In fact, my mother’s piety, very ardent and very solid, with nothing cold or narrow about it, was averse from short-sighted views or pettinesses. I should like to call it the piety of an *English convert*. If the reader be acquainted with any such, as, for instance, Lady Georgiana Fullerton, Elizabeth Seton, etc., he will understand all that is meant by this expression—width of view united to the most generous devotion to duty, and a resigned and even heroic acceptance of the Divine Will.

“Her piety was so natural,” my sister continues ; “her acts said more than her words. Her faith made itself felt in all she did, but so also did that freedom of spirit which made mamma so amiable and so cheerful.

“She repudiated the maxims of the world, but at the same time rejected the narrow notions which would seem to prohibit to piety any permissible recreation. She held that family life should be as happy as possible. How careful she was to impart to all our little festivities, birthdays, etc., all their

homely charm ! What memories come back to us of the Christmas-tree prepared with the secrecy and mystery which redoubled our ecstasies on beholding the lighted tree, with the thousand and one marvels weighing down its branches !

“ Brought up in a position where intercourse with the great world is frequent, she was to the end of her life fond of society ; but her piety, uprightness, and good sense made her carefully distinguish between what is permissible and what is not. In our reading, as well as our relations with others, she carefully guarded against everything that might, even in the remotest degree, have a dangerous tendency for our souls. For the rest, she acted with a delicate freedom, in which one felt at ease because the conscience was fully satisfied.”

It would be beyond the purpose of this slight sketch to enter into further details, but I will say a few words as to the way in which my mother and father regarded preparation for First Communion.

My father reserved to himself the honour of giving me my first lessons in the Catechism. I still remember the impression made upon me by the accent of conviction with which he explained the meaning of the text.

As to the First Communion, one of my sisters—much younger than myself—writes : “ Our parents had inspired us with so high an idea of this great act, that, when my brother was preparing for it, I

regarded him with great respect, for it seemed to me that he already belonged to God !”

But my mother’s sentiments may be more exactly known by a letter, of which the envelope is inscribed :

“ *To my son Henry, on the eve of his First Communion.*”

“ May 25, 1872,

“ *Eve of the First Communion.*

“ MY BELOVED HENRY,

“ Elias the Prophet, having withdrawn into the desert, to flee from the persecution of Jezabel, was visited by an Angel, who brought him a cake baked upon the hearth, and a vessel of water, and said to him : ‘ Arise and eat, for thou hast a great journey to go.’ The bread of Elias, dear Henry, is a figure of the Holy Eucharist ; and to-morrow, my dearest son, you will receive the visit, not of an Angel, but of Jesus *Himself*, Who will give you His adorable Body and His precious Blood, to prepare you for the long journey of life, the journey which has for its end and object the Promised Land—namely, Heaven. To-morrow, dear boy, you will begin the life of the Christian, and Jesus will come and say to you : ‘ Arise and eat. Receive My Body and Blood to sustain you in your pilgrimage. From henceforth I am your Support, your Strength in all your troubles and all your temptations.’ Oh, my son, what happiness for you to receive your God ! to receive this same Jesus Who died for you upon the Cross, Who is entered into Heaven, and will

prepare a place for you if you serve Him faithfully ! What happiness also for me, your mother—for me, who suffered so much to become a Catholic—to be able to say : ‘ To-morrow, Lord, I shall present in Thy temple my firstborn, my beloved son ; to-morrow I shall lead to Thy holy altar this darling child to receive the Bread of Life, which is Thyself.’ Oh, dear child, my heart is overflowing with joy, and I can exclaim with David : ‘ *Expectans expectavi Dominum, et intendit mihi, et exaudivit preces meas !*’

“ I also shall have the happiness of approaching this holy Table to feed upon this heavenly banquet, and when Jesus is in my heart I will pray Him to grant you His abundant benedictions, to give you strength to serve Him all the days of your life. May the Lord grant you in these evil days to range yourself with the servants of God, so that, when your pilgrimage shall end, He may say to you : ‘ Well done, good and faithful servant : enter thou into the joy of thy Lord !’ (Matt. xxv. 11).

“ But, my very dear little boy, remember that the journey you are to begin to-morrow has to be taken along a road that leads among briars and thorns, and to-morrow, when you receive your God, remember that he who would follow Jesus must carry his cross, like his Divine Master. Crosses will not be wanting to you, dear Henry, for life is full of them ; but when storms arise around you, when the temptations of the world assail your heart, oh, my son, then ‘ arise and eat.’ Go and receive the Bread

of Life, which is your sustenance, and you will have strength to overcome all temptations, to endure all the storms of life. And if unhappily, dear Henry, you should ever forget God and fall into some serious fault, oh, then, rise up again, go and seek pardon of God in the tribunal of penance, and Jesus will give Himself again to you ; He will receive you to the banquet of His love ; He will press you again to His Divine Heart.

“ To-morrow, my dearest son, when God shall deign to descend into your breast, say to Him with all your heart : ‘ *Domine, non sum dignus.*’ No, you are not worthy—you never will be—but He, He Himself, has called you. Come, then, in obedience to Him ; offer yourself to Him in proof of your love, and pray to Mary, your Mother, your refuge, to present you to Jesus, and to obtain for you the grace never to displease Him. It was Mary who won for your poor mother the grace to be a Catholic. It is Mary who has protected me in a thousand circumstances of my life. Mary is all-powerful with Jesus. She will obtain everything for you. To-morrow, then, place yourself under her protection, take her for your Patroness, without forgetting the Blessed Joseph, the Foster-father of Jesus, who often carried Him in his arms. May Jesus, Mary, and Joseph be with you to-morrow and always, my beloved son !

“ In your Communion to-morrow do not forget to pray for your mother, asking for her a perfect union

of her will with that of God ; pray for your father, that he may have grace to fulfil in all things his duties as a Christian ; pray for your sisters, that they may be modest and simple girls.

“ From the depth of my heart I bless you, my beloved son, my Henry, whom I love with all the tenderness of a mother’s heart.

“ May God the Father be with you, Who is your Creator !

“ May God the Son be with you, Who is your Redeemer !

“ May God the Holy Ghost be with you, Who is your Sanctifier !

“ To-morrow, dear child, we shall be united in the Heart of Jesus ; together we shall say, ‘ *Domine, non sum dignus,*’ and shall go together to the heavenly banquet Jesus has given us on earth until the happy moment when, our pilgrimage accomplished, we attain its end, and may, by the grace of God, take our place at the banquet of the Divine Lamb. This is the sincerest hope and prayer of your tenderly loving mother,

“ LOUISE D’ARRAS.”

This letter well expresses the lofty, and above all the Christian, idea held by our mother as to her educational duties in regard to her children. At the same time—and this is a marked feature, which I have already indicated in her character—the piety, which kept the foremost place and penetrated

her whole life, was allied to a perfect ease and freedom in regard to the legitimate requirements of a woman of the world.

“Mamma,” writes one of my sisters, “never failed to cultivate our minds by carefully selected reading. Together with the most beautiful pages of the Bible, those of the great masters, whether of poetry or prose, had their place in the programme. She knew by heart numerous passages of Shakespeare and Dante, and loved to explain and comment upon them to us. She was exceedingly fond of history, which she knew how to relate so as to make it live again, as we gathered round her of an evening. On a journey she took care to draw our attention to the beautiful scenes of Nature in which she so delighted, and which give an idea of the power or the majesty of God. Then came visits to fine churches, and attendance at the grand ceremonies which spoke so eloquently to her soul—for instance, at the London Oratory, or at Farm Street. But neither were other monuments and works of art neglected. I remember, when we were visiting one of the celebrated picture-galleries of London, her joy at seeing us in admiration before certain works of the great masters. Also, on another occasion, she recalled with a sort of maternal pride the memory of this hour, when she perceived that her lessons were not altogether without fruit. She not only felt it incumbent upon her to inspire us with a love of art, but also to accustom us to frequent the receptions of the best society. The

last time we stayed in England before my entrance into the religious life, she undertook a long journey in order to take us on a visit to Mr. and Lady Catherine Berkeley,\* who were that year giving some brilliant entertainments ; and if we quitted the world without regret, it certainly was not because we were not permitted to realize what we were giving up for God."

In this last sentence there may possibly be an allusion to a little episode which my mother related with some amusement.

At the time of the departure of my sisters to the "*Petites Sœurs des Pauvres*," certain evil tongues did not fail to attribute their vocation to pressure, and to point out that it was an easy way of escaping from future anxieties. My mother, who was aware of this gossip, happened one day to be at a reception, where a lady, whose fortune was much larger than her own, had the bad taste to say to her : " Is it not a pity that these young ladies, your daughters, should have given up the world while they are so young, and before having had any opportunity of going into Society?" My mother, as well as others who were present, guessed the further meaning of this speech, and felt that the vocation of her daughters was questioned. However humble she might be in matters affecting herself only, she was now cut to the quick, but, with perfect self-control, answered very courteously : " Oh, pardon, madam,

\* Robert Berkeley, Esq., of Spetchley Park, married Lady Mary Catherine, daughter of Thomas, third Earl of Kenmare.

my daughters, ever since their childhood, have spent some months of every year with their family in England, and with my friends there. I wish all young girls in France had the opportunity of mixing in a circle equally attractive and equally distinguished."

It seems that there was in the company assembled a smile—of satisfaction.

## VI

### VOCATIONS

CARDINAL WISEMAN, who was so kind to Miss Lechmere at the time of her conversion, had, during the time of her banishment from her home, put her into communication with some of the great Catholic families, and even at one time had helped her by his alms. He continued to interest himself about her afterwards with paternal solicitude. Some of his letters are particularly touching for the small details in which this great prelate condescended to occupy himself on her behalf. When, in 1858, his protégée was about to be married, he cordially consented to give the nuptial benediction.

In token of her gratitude, my mother made him a present of a chalice. In her spirit of faith, she greatly appreciated the honour of offering a sacred vessel which would contain the Blood of Our Lord at every Mass. Had she then some prevision that perhaps, in return, the Good Master would choose one of her children for the service of the altar? I know not, but I do know that when my vocation was manifested, she asked herself if it might not be

the delicate and Divine answer of God to this particular gift.

Our Lord's call was to come, stroke after stroke, for her three eldest. I was the first ; I donned the cassock in 1880. A few months later my second sister entered at the Little Sisters of the Poor, her elder sister following her example two years afterwards.

In Heaven only shall we learn what was our mother's share in these three vocations. Were they not the result of so many prayers offered for us, the recompense for her heroic courage in following the call of God into the true Church ? Nevertheless, supposing that our mother asked of Our Lord the honour of giving Him her children, and if, by the whole trend of our education she contributed to make us think highly of this call, she would never allow herself one word from which we might have gathered that there existed any such desire on her part. She had too high and too just an idea of the action of God upon souls. When we first opened our minds to her on the subject, she most wisely reminded us of the extremely serious side of the question, and pointed out its difficulties. At the same time she was careful not to lower in our eyes the value of so great a favour. Moreover, Our Lord had particularly prepared her for understanding it.

In 1853, three years after her conversion, she had made a retreat at Paris (Rue du Regard) under the

direction of the Rev. Father Studer, S.J., and this had left a lasting impression upon her mind. She spoke of it fifty years afterwards. She thought then that she had an attraction towards the religious life, and as her love of the poor was very strong, she bent her steps to the Hôtel-Dieu. There the examples of devotedness in the service of the sick, the courage and self-denial she witnessed, made a deep impression upon the new convert.

In spite of these inclinations and of her sympathy with the work, her director assured her, after taking some time for reflection and observation, that it was not according to God's intention that she should be a hospital nurse. But, from this experiment, my mother retained a particular affection for the Hôtel-Dieu, to which she frequently returned. She spoke of it with admiration, and at the same time with a profound respect for the religious life. "God did not want me," she said. "He wanted three of them. He took my three children. It is an honour for which I can never thank Him enough!"

That is to say that, in the matter of her children's vocations, she was, to quote the words of a witness, "absolutely heroic in her self-forgetfulness and her unreserved acceptance of the Divine pleasure." "My children are not my own property," she would say. "I will never resist the will of God, even were I to die for it!"

She felt that the task assigned to her by Providence was to soften the pain of the sacrifice to our

father. To him, at first, it was the breakdown of all his dreams. The shock was terrible, and his health was much affected by it.

“Anyone who did not see his struggle,” wrote one of his daughters who first witnessed it, “who did not hear his expressions of distress, would find it difficult to imagine them. Not that with him there was any decided wish to withstand the plans of God, but with his almost maternal tenderness he tried to persuade himself that God could not exact so great a sacrifice.”

Little by little my mother succeeded in calming his grief. She spoke the language of faith, which my father understood so well. One day when he was unusually depressed, she read to him that passage in the Gospels in which Our Lord says to one of His disciples who wished to remain with his aged father : “Let the dead bury their dead : follow thou Me.” My mother read this with such an accent of faith, and doubtless accompanied by a fervent prayer, that my father took the book, read the scene over again, and with tears in his eyes owned himself vanquished. “When Our Lord speaks thus, what can I say ?”

Touched, perhaps, by this generosity, and by our mother’s prayers, Our Lord did yet more. With His Divine delicacy He Himself deigned to console my father. From the first he had dreaded the day when I should take my vows, when all hope of return would be irremediably gone. Now, a day or two

before I made them, his soul was filled with such intense joy that at first it was overwhelming. He arrived, beaming, at the house of the Rev. Father Buns, the Superior at Boulogne, declaring that something inexplicable had taken place within him.

On the morning of the great festival I received at Gemert the following letter :

“ MY REVEREND FATHER AND BELOVED SON,

“ After receiving the letter announcing that you were going to take your vows, I experienced a feeling of great joy, and I rejoice with you in your happiness.

“ I am astonished to be able to write these lines, but what I am telling you is the truth. I could never have believed that such a change could have been wrought in me.

“ I have always considered the Jesuits as the Zouaves of the Church ; I am certain that you will be valiant, and that you will do for religion what your grandfather and great-grandfather did for their country. I embrace you, my dearest Henry, from the depth of my heart.

“ YOUR FATHER, who is very *proud* of you.”

And my mother took up the strain :

“ To-day, with the Blessed Virgin, I can sing my Magnificat : *Ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes.*

“Yes, dear Henry, I feel that for all eternity I may be called blessed among women, to have a son bearing the name of Jesus, and daughters who are espoused to Him.

“I congratulate you with all my heart, and I will say a great *Te Deum* for you to-morrow. I feel how happy you will be, my dearly-loved son, in giving yourself to Jesus, your King. I wish I could see you and tell you how happy I am in your happiness.

“As for your father, it is a real miracle of the grace of God ; he is *full of joy*. He has even said : ‘If I were offered the epaulettes of an officer for Henry, I should prefer the cassock of a Jesuit.’ And yet you know how he loves you, and how much your decision cost him.”

Before I myself had taken my vows, my father and mother had twice renewed their sacrifice, in the departure of my two sisters.

The blow was so severe that my mother at first wondered if my father would be able to support it. As for her, when the hour for parting arrived, she was what she had always proved herself to be.

“I remember,” writes my youngest sister, “the painful moment of separation ; it was the first irrevocable separation, the first breaking up of ‘the dear nest,’ as mamma called it. She embraced me without being able to utter a word. She was painfully flushed from the effort of self-mastery in order

not to afflict my father. This effort was so great that it brought on a sharp pain near the heart, and she then began to feel the first inroads of the malady which was gradually to reduce her to a state of such great infirmity.

“As to my father, in order to make the sacrifice to God more complete, he resolved to take me himself to Dunkirk, where I was to enter as a postulant. God alone could measure the merit of this act.”

I will mention farther on the Divine and delicate attentions by which Our Lord rendered to our parents, even here below, the promised “hundred-fold” in supernatural joy ; here it must be added that the sacrifice, once made, had often to be renewed, and that if my mother never regretted it, and if she thanked Our Lord for it a thousand thousand times, she did not feel the pressure of its reality the less.

“But,” observes one of my sisters, “she was determined on self-renunciation to the end. On some of her visits I have seen her pale, unable to speak, but never did she utter the least complaint. And yet, even after many years, she felt the sacrifice to that degree that one day, after quitting the parlour where she bade me adieu, she was seen to make her way to a bench in the street, where she had to remain for more than half an hour, her limbs refusing to carry her.”

And my sister concludes : “It was she who was

our strength at the moment of separation. Her love, her self-forgetfulness, have been the constant support of our efforts to give the Master all He asked of us. Seeing her so generous, our heart might bleed, our whole being might feel crushed by this separation, but the thought of drawing back or yielding never even occurred to our mind."

To conclude, I quote, almost at random, two or three passages from her letters.

One day she proposed to pay me a visit at Lille. I informed her that I was sent to Amiens for the vacation. She answered: "*I understand* [underlined] the situation perfectly. . . . I make the sacrifice gladly, for, in the first place, I want you to rest, and next, I am happy to offer to God this sacrifice, and to tell Him that you belong to Him and to His service."

And in another letter she completes this thought: "I must unceasingly remember the words of Jesus to His Mother: 'Know you not that I must be about My Father's business?' This will often be the case with you, now that you are in the apostolate."

"The more I realize" (she writes again) "the sublimity of the double vocation of priest and Jesuit, the more I thank God for the great favour He has granted me. What consolation, what sure hope of going to Heaven, in the fact that my children are religious! Often I feel very sad because of the empty places round me, and my own solitude, but

I think of the end of this life, and the joy it will then be to have given my children to God. And in these moments of sadness and discouragement, so painful to my heart, I renew my sacrifice."

We will end with a letter written during one of the last years of her life.

My mother happened to be at Rome on my sister's birthday, and naturally looked forward to paying her a visit, to offer her greetings and good wishes. But on that day there was Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, and the Mother Prioress asked her to sacrifice her visit to the parlour. She answered by this note, half in French, half in English :

" MY DEAR DARLING,

" God bless you on your birthday !—a privileged day for me, in giving me the dearest of children. My good Marguerite, I bless you. I should like to see you and embrace you, but it is not God's will. May His Holy Name be blessed !

" I wish you all the spiritual graces possible. If it be God's will that you should suffer, may He give you great joy in your soul to bear the trial ! The hours are so long in the night, when one is suffering. I hope He will restore you to health, my dearest ; but if you are desirous of flying away to Heaven, you must not mind my sorrow : you must go and prepare me a place, and pray God to shorten my Purgatory.

" I feel that the thought of my grief may hinder

you from asking for Heaven : you must not think about me. I ask for you, as also for Henry and Marie, that the holy will of God be done. I accept everything that God wills for you all.

“ I embrace you a thousand thousand times, my darling.

“ Your poor mother,

“ LOUISE.”

## VII

### THE ROYAL WAY OF THE HOLY CROSS

SUCCESSIVE departures had emptied "the nest," but all those who had composed it were still living. The first break in the circle was caused by my father's death.

For some years past, trials and family bereavements had helped to undermine his naturally robust constitution. In 1891 he had an attack of apoplexy, from which he recovered sufficiently to let us hope that we might still have him with us for some time. He himself earnestly desired to live at least till I said my first Mass, which for years he had been hoping to serve, when the time came. Our Lord decided otherwise.

"At the closure of the novena for the Assumption," my mother wrote (September 2, 1892): "We had a very beautiful ceremony at the Cathedral. Your poor father would follow in the procession the whole of the way. It was really touching to see him walking with such difficulty to do honour to our Mother in Heaven, and he has not suffered from this great fatigue."

But may not the effort have been too much for

an old man's strength? It seems doubtful, for a few days afterwards there was a second attack, though a mild one. As for my father, the thought that, if he had committed an imprudence, it was for the sake of giving glory to the Blessed Virgin, helped him to accept the trial generously.

Alas! he was more seriously stricken than was at first supposed. From that time he began to grow gradually weaker.

Shortly before Christmas my mother wrote: "The midnight Mass will be my only Christmas joy this year. You can understand how sad I feel at seeing your poor father suffering so much. After all, the sweet Child Jesus only gives me what He gave His Mother—the Cross. She had to accept it from His hand, even amid her joy on bringing Him into the world. I also desire to accept it as she did."

During the last days of December, when I was staying with my father, a chill, with great oppression on the chest, brought him to so alarming a state that there was no longer any hesitation as to proposing that he should receive the Last Sacraments. He was surprised at first, and declared that he did not intend to receive Communion until the day after the morrow, the day of my departure for Enghien. We had recourse to Our Blessed Lady, he joining with us in invoking her, and almost immediately he asked that he might receive Holy Communion that same evening.

The ceremony took place about five o'clock. He said the *Confiteor* and the Act of Contrition, and made the responses to the other prayers. The evening was quiet and calm, although followed by some hours of agitation and deep depression ; but, thanks to his lifelong devotion, so great and tender, to the most Blessed Virgin, it was always easy, by reciting with him a decade of the Rosary, to calm him, and even enable him to sleep.

The ten days and nights of his illness were sanctified by prayer.

Monday, January 9, was a bad day. He lost the power of speech ; but, for our consolation, God permitted that the last word he uttered was the sweet name of Mary. At night the agony began. Towards midnight we sent for the Rev. Father Hoffmann, Redemptorist, his confessor, in order that he might have a priest with him to the last. We said the prayers for the dying and the Rosary. The Father had given five or six absolutions ; he felt the pulse, and had just said, " It is the end," when all at once the face became extraordinarily luminous and took an almost ecstatic expression. The dying man raised himself up with energy, and looked earnestly at the Father, who, greatly moved, said : " You die for the good God, do you not ?" He made a sign of assent, and laid his head upon the pillow. There were two or three slight contractions, and his soul had entered into eternity. He had, to use the beautiful expression of General de Sonis,

“found Mary on the threshold to inspire him with confidence, now his hour to cross it had arrived.”

We said the *De Profundis* and the five *Paters* and *Aves* then, instinctively, to thank God for so many graces and for this unspeakably consoling death ; my mother and I said the *Te Deum*.

A few days afterwards I returned to Enghien, leaving my mother alone in the house she had known once so full of happiness and animation. She accepted the trial with that serenity which is the fruit of faith. “I have nothing but the *Fiat* to comfort me. I offer my solitude to the good God for your dear father, and in reparation for all my sins.” And in another letter : “It is a great sacrifice to be all alone, but it is because my children have given themselves to God, and I reckon upon my good Jesus to make it up to me in graces at the hour of my death.”

Besides, the remembrance of the last pious moments of my father was a comfort to her.

“Almost every day, when I come into this room, and lie down on the bed on which he died, I recall that last look . . . that transfigured countenance. . . . Father Hoffmann tells me that he never saw a man die so holy a death, and that God granted this grace to your dear father in recompense for the sacrifice of giving up his children. Truly it is the hundredfold ! What a grace is a good death ! God Himself could not give us a greater !”

And in another letter : “I have been saying

thousands of *Ave Marias*, for I followed the procession almost the whole way. I was so happy in the thought that your dear father was watching us from Heaven, and celebrating the praises of our beloved Mother near to her. I am so often with him in my prayers and Communions."

A few months later, my mother was present at my Ordination and at my first Mass. In a letter dated December 24, 1892, she wrote :

" I shall pray for you to-night. May God give you all the graces you need to become a priest after His own heart, and to celebrate the holy mysteries, which surpass in grandeur all that we can imagine ! What a glory for us to have a son, our only son, our first-born, a priest ! A mother must be happy to have her son a king, but a priest is much more than a king, since the King of kings obeys him and descends from Heaven at his voice !"

One may imagine what were her feelings when she saw me elevate the Host, bend over the Chalice, which was adorned with her most precious jewels, and when she received Communion from my hands. The thought of my father was ever present during those blessed days, the more so because, to supply his place, M. de Nicolay, his most intimate friend, had had the delicate attention of offering to serve my Mass. Madame de Nicolay was praying by the side of my mother, and the priest-assistant was M. l'Abbé Hesse, Curé-Doyen of Domart-en-Pon-

thieu, who had formerly prepared me for my First Communion. Thus all the memories of the dear old days were revived.

But consolations were henceforth to be only occasional oases on the rugged road which Our Lord opened to my mother, in order to lead her on towards a much higher perfection. Bereavements and trials were to follow at brief intervals one upon another.

In 1894 Mrs. Shirley, her tenderly-loved sister, fell dangerously ill. My mother hastened to her, and never ceased to pray for this dear one who was dying. One of her letters at that time alludes to the death of a "Little Sister" at Aix: "She died the death of the predestined: God so enriched her with graces in her last moments. I hope He will do the same for your dear aunt. Every day I say for her, modifying it slightly, the prayer of St. Aloysius Gonzaga: 'O my Sovereign, St. Mary, I confide *her* to your faithful care.' . . . It is so good to abandon oneself to Mary, our most tender Mother. . . . Pray for me, dearest Henry, that I may have courage to bear this new trial with resignation to the will of God."

During the earlier period of her stay in London—for what reason I do not know—she had had to go into lodgings, and from thence she went daily to her sister's. "To-morrow," she writes, "I shall be installed at your aunt's house 'for good.' I shall not be sorry, for the long walk every morning and evening was very fatiguing. The only thing I regret is that I was very near to that *delicious*

church, the Oratory. On returning of an evening, I always went there for a while, to pray. It is so good to find oneself in that vast space, so near to Our Blessed Lord in His tabernacle. Oh, how glad one is to be a Catholic in this city of London ! . . . Your poor aunt is so changed ; her dear face wears the look of death. It is distressing to see her, and to feel that soon she will no longer be with us."

Mrs. Shirley died on August 25, Feast of St. Louis, my mother's patron Saint.

Two years later my mother wrote from Nice : " Father Le Vigoureux has been preaching on the *Pater*. He unfolded in an admirable manner this Divine prayer of Our Lord. From this time I shall say it with more devotion. What a grace to be able to call the Eternal Father ' Our Father,' and to know that He is truly a Father to us, and the most tender and loving of all fathers ! That especially touched me, because, when we were all kneeling round the death-bed of my poor sister, I suggested that we should say the ' Our Father ' altogether for our dear one who was dying. Protestants and Catholics can say this sublime prayer, in which are expressed all the needs of our soul : the worship of God, the desire of the Bread of Life, and the entreaty for pardon for our faults."

Three months had scarcely elapsed when, on returning from church on the morning of December 29, my mother opened her English newspaper, and on the first page read the announcement of the

sudden death of Sir Edmund Lechmere, her brother. It may be imagined what a blow this was, and how grievous. My uncle had left the Rhydd in the afternoon, in perfect health, to attend an important electoral meeting at Pershore, near Worcester, which he represented in Parliament. At the moment of entering the hall, he fell into the arms of a friend. Death was almost instantaneous. The news had been telegraphed to the London papers before Lady Lechmere had been able to announce it to any member of the family. Lord Coventry, who on the death of Sir Edmund had immediately started by express for the Rhydd, had not dared to inform Lady Lechmere until the next morning.

My mother was now the only one of her generation left. But this fresh bereavement was less distressing to her than the suddenness of the death. My uncle was a Ritualist, very faithful to his duties and very charitable. Before leaving for Pershore, he was present with his family and servants at evening prayers in his private chapel. It was even noticed that he was particularly attentive at prayer. We may reasonably hope that Our Lord gave him time for recollection before entering into his eternity, but it is easy to understand that the circumstances of his death added to my mother's grief.

Another trial, but one which, as we shall see, subsequently brought ample compensations, befell her about this time.

My youngest sister, for fourteen years a Little Sister of the Poor, suddenly announced her resolution to enter Carmel ; and Our Lord permitted events to be so precipitated that neither my mother nor we had time to accustom ourselves to this idea before we found it an accomplished fact.

My mother's first anxiety was to ascertain if it were really the will of God ; but it also meant a great and painful sacrifice for her own acceptance. It seemed the end of so many maternal joys that still remained to her, in spite of intervening distance, so long as my sister remained a Little Sister of the Poor ; but now henceforth the separation was to become as absolute as possible. Two letters allow us to understand what she felt.

The first is dated May 7, 1897 :

“ Marguerite is to take the holy habit on Sunday, the 12th. I start to-morrow, the 8th, for Trevoux. I need not say that I feel very sad, and that I ask your prayers for Sunday, which will be a day of immolation for me as much as for Marguerite.

“ It will be very trying, and I am too old for so many emotions. Happily, God gives me strength ; without that I could not bear up against the many troubles, bereavements, and trials that He has deigned to send me for some time past. We must believe that all this is to prepare me for the last sacrifice, and I thank Him for giving me the opportunity of suffering so much. I have often envied

those who have died on the scaffold or have been shot, in the cause of God. If I had been permitted to choose my death, that is the death I should have chosen. But God is making me die to *myself*, and to all the joys of the heart. This is worth most, for there is no room left in it for self-love.

“ Briefly, dear Henry, pray much for me, for I shall need it on Sunday, when the grating closes between me and my darling Marguerite, and I shall have embraced her for the last time in this world.

“ You will never know what that means to a mother, for you *cannot* conceive what is the love of a mother for her child. It is a love so mysterious and so strong that no other love can equal it.

“ However, I hope I shall have the courage to say, *Fiat !*”

A second letter is dated from Trevoux, May 12 :

“ The sacrifice is complete, and our so beloved Marguerite is clothed in the Carmelite habit. The Rev. Father Charrier presided at the ceremony, and the Father Rector preached. His sermon was very touching. ‘ After having for fourteen years begged alms for the poor of Jesus Christ, your hand is outstretched to-day for yourself, to ask for the poverty and immolation of Carmel.’

“ We went in procession to conduct Marguerite to the enclosure, where she embraced me for the last time. Needless to say how my heart was rent.”

After the customary details of the ceremony and some particulars respecting the Carmel of Trevoux, my mother continues :

“ At all events, I am not without some consolation in my sorrow, for I hope and believe that Marguerite will not find the Rule too difficult ; and then I shall say, *Fiat!* and if my darling is happy, then I shall thank God. Truly I have suffered so much that sacrifices seem to have become easier, and Father Charrier assures me that that of to-day opens Heaven to me. If this be so, I immolate myself with joy ! For my days on earth cannot, in the nature of things, be very long—ten years, perhaps—and what is that in comparison with eternity ?

“ Who knows if her beloved father may not have done something to obtain her entrance into Carmel ? Without doubt he was with us, and one day we shall rejoice with him in eternity.

“ Trevoux is admirably situated, and the surrounding country appears to be very beautiful. The weather is splendid. I am well ; the heat is good for my rheumatism.

“ Certainly God gives me strength to bear everything. If Marguerite is happy, I shall be comforted, especially if it be the will of God.”

After a few details of the journey my mother mentions a fresh trial, and adds :

“ What pains and sorrows there are in this life, and how beautiful it will be when we reach Heaven !



THE GARDEN FRONT, SEVERN END, WORCESTERSHIRE.



I hope the good God will give me some day a little corner there, and that I shall behold Him ! I cannot remember if I sent you the beautiful prayer to the Madonna that I found in one of my Italian books. Here it is :

“ ‘ Quanto è dolce, o Madre mia,  
Il tuo nome di Maria :  
Mi da pace, e tanto mi piace,  
Che il vorrei sempre chiamar.’ ”

I cannot tell you how this prayer comforts me ; I say it I know not how many times a day.”

Two years later, if I am not mistaken, an English newspaper brought her tidings of a new misfortune, which, although less acute than some, helped her again to realize that Our Lord wished to detach her more and more from earth.

“ God has again sent me a great trial. I sent you yesterday the English paper describing the misfortune which has happened to the family—the complete destruction by fire of Severn End. It is a cruel loss, for it was so full of memories of my beloved father, my brother, and my sister. The old mansion, or at least the property, has belonged to the family from the time of William the Conqueror. The building itself dated from the reign of Henry VII., and was unique in the neighbourhood for its style and its beauty. I wept very much on learning this sad news. The loss is enormous, and, much more than that, it is irreparable ; but we

cannot thank God enough for having preserved Eddy's life [her nephew] and that of his son. A quarter of an hour later, and they would have perished. For me this misfortune is another lesson in detachment. I did so love this dear old house !”

Whilst Our Lord allowed blow after blow to fall upon my mother in all her family affections, he was drawing her to a life of perfect interior resignation and voluntary self-sacrifice.

Her Carmelite, at this time the confidante of her inmost thoughts, writes : “ Mamma then laid down for herself a rule of life which was to make the remaining fourteen years of her earthly existence a time of prayer, voluntary expiation, and suffering, generously borne for God, with a smiling face, an entire ease and freedom of spirit, and a serenity of soul which usually betrayed itself by the charming sense of humour she retained to the end of her days.

“ The year that my father died, my mother came to see me at Turin. As we were walking together and conversing on the lives of the Saints, I chanced to say—I forget in what connection—that there were no Saints who had not had bodily sufferings, either by sickness or else by penance. My mother appeared to be troubled ; her eyes filled with tears, and her look had a singular expression of pain. I tried to ascertain the cause, but she evaded it, changed the conversation, and recovered her serenity.



THE GREAT COURT, SEVERN END



When, after my entrance into Carmel, she confided to me the secrets of her penitential life, I ventured to refer to those troubled moments of hers at Turin. 'For years,' she answered, 'I had been wishing to practise penance, without having dared to own it, fearing lest my confessor might consider me too old to be allowed to do so.' "

A rule of life of the following year (1894), happily preserved, is an eloquent proof that, in spite of her sixty-two years, she generously responded to Our Lord's invitation. Discipline, Monday, Wednesday, Friday; bracelet, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday; crown, Friday. (She refers to a bracelet and circlet with points of iron.) Prayer with prostration during the night of Thursday to Friday; iron discipline on the first Fridays of the month and certain other great occasions. There were found, moreover, in her clothes sent to the "Little Sisters," or intended for other poor people, a small box and bag containing chains, a discipline of iron, and two of cords, both stained with blood, one very much so.

It was probably at the same period that she wrote in one of the books she used daily: "O my Jesus, cut and crucify this body of sin, that it may undergo in this world the punishment due to it; but afterwards spare me, O my Jesus! At the hour of death help me and receive me."

"Her letters," writes her Carmelite again, "asked me to suggest other practices in use at Carmel. I

felt bound—for she was then sixty-four years of age—to entreat her to give up certain penances which her infirmities rendered too painful. But what generosity was shown in this voluntary expiation, added to almost continual suffering caused by rheumatism, which was soon to render her incapable of dragging herself about without the aid of a stick, sometimes even of two sticks ! Added to this, the rheumatism grievously interfered with her rest at night.

In fact, from her letters written about this time to her Carmelite might be extracted an entire treatise on mortification.

A few quotations will throw light upon her simple generosity and serenity of soul :

“ *February, 1896.*

“ Yes, my dearest, I will *fast* from your dear letters until Easter. That will be a *good* mortification which will make me suffer. As for the other practices, I shall follow them as much as I can. I will make good use of my bracelet, I promise you, as well as of your present ” (a discipline). “ As I cannot fast, and there is *maigre* diet on Wednesday and Friday only, I want to do all I can in compensation. I cannot understand how one can meditate upon the Passion, behold Our Lord prostrate in His agony, His sacred Body suffused with bloody sweat, and evade all penance ! I am resolved to keep my Lent with as much fervour as possible. I hope it may help me on towards Heaven and my blessed

Jesus. Oh, when I say ' Jesus ' before doing any act of penance in honour of this Divine Name, it makes my heart leap ! It is so sweet to give oneself up to these little practices in the silence of one's room at night, between God and one's soul ! . . . It helps me to detachment, and in this way I can expiate the little faults of the day—little impatiences, failures in charity, etc., and then the sins of my past life. I find it also very consoling to offer these little practices which make the body suffer, in reparation for the sufferings of Jesus and the insults of which He is the object. How much He *suffers* now ! *What hatred of God !* What frightful things are done in our days ! . . . I was told the other day of the *Luciferians*, who obtain sacred Hosts by sacrilegious Communions, and offer them to Satan. Poor Jesus Christ ! Who can wonder at His sweat of blood ?”

“ *Easter, 1896.*

“ How are you, my dear angel, after this long and severe fast of the Carmelites, and all the other austerities ? I can judge, from the little that I do, that you have been happy to suffer a little with Him Whom we love, our adorable Jesus. I shall be much rejoiced to receive one of your dear letters again, which do my soul so much good.

“ We have had splendid sermons, given by Father le Vigoureux, Prior of the Dominicans at Jerusalem. He spoke admirably of God's love for us—a love which had no beginning and will have no end.

After remarking how happy we think ourselves in the possession of an earthly love which lasts ten or twenty years, he concluded : ‘ But what is this compared with the love of God, Who is eternal ? ’ I thought of you, and said to myself : ‘ She possesses this love ; she enjoys it, understands it, and will have it for all eternity. It is this love which makes her so happy in her penitential life !

“ How I thank God for leading me into the path of penance. I embrace and thank you for having suggested some of its practices to me. You do not know the good you have done me. I had so great a need and desire of bodily penances to humble and sanctify myself, and to make reparation to God. If I begin to let my mind grow dissipated on outward things, the discipline leads me back to God, and my ‘ crown ’ unites me to Him. I *will* love Him ; I *will* be His ; and the more I see how little He is thought of in the world, the more I will love Him, my adored Lord Jesus ! Ask of Him that I may often call to mind His Passion. There are some Italian prayers that I often say, and especially ‘ *Dolce cor del mio Gesù, fa ch’ io t’ amo sempre più !* ’ And again :

“ ‘ Quanto è dolce, o Madre mia,  
Il tuo nome di Maria :  
Mi da pace, e tanto mi piace,  
Che il vorrei sempre chiamar.’ ”

As I am often alone in the street or in an omnibus, I say these little prayers.”

One might multiply quotations. In a letter I read again :

“ I offer every stroke of my discipline in union with the blows of Our Lord’s scourging, and to show my boundless love for Him.

“ It is the penance I esteem the most, for it causes much pain to the body and does much good to my poor soul. I gave to God the most precious things I had, my children ; now I give Him my body, and I love to make it suffer for Him, especially when I know of the abominations which are committed. Oh, how I suffer, seeing what things are done !”

Those who knew the joyous vivacity of Madame d’Arras ; her witty repartees and merry laugh ; her delicate thoughtfulness to give pleasure ; her taste for society, music, and art ; her love of beautiful scenery and of travelling, probably never guessed or imagined that the spirit of mortification was, in reality, together with an entire abandonment to the Divine Will, the secret of her serenity and the foundation of her joy.

## VIII

### THE MAINSPRING OF THE SOUL

How often in painful circumstances—and these were frequent in the life of Madame d'Arras—those who approached her heard her say : “ For pity’s sake, conceal nothing. I like to know the whole truth about the matter ; then I can look the thing—misfortune or difficulty—in the face, and ask myself, before God, what it will be wise to do, say my *Fiat*, and set to work.”

The whole of this notice will make it evident that a daily increasing conformity to the Divine Will was the supernatural nutriment of this calm courage, just as its purest source was in habitual prayer. But the portrait would be incomplete if one did not add that this valiant Christian had received from Heaven that native power of resistance, a combination of constancy and calm energy, which constitutes perhaps her finest characteristic of her race. It is found in almost all the converts of the Oxford Movement. In her case, also, there was a very lofty human ideal. Mean, or selfish, or interested views, a want of uprightness or loyalty, she would have regarded with shame and horror.

Together with these strong qualities of will, God had given her a quick elasticity of spirit, which enabled her to rebound from the shock of trial instead of allowing it to depress her. Owing to this gift, her mind and heart retained much of their freshness and youthfulness to the end of her days. Let it be added that her enlightened piety had taught her to take, with great simplicity of spirit and gratitude to God, the little pleasures and relaxations which, on various occasions, a kind Providence placed at her disposal.

Even when on her last journeys, at the age of seventy-five and seventy-six, she enjoyed the charm of grand or pleasing scenery, could admire a work of art, and grow enthusiastic over beautiful music. During the last months of her life she reviewed with interest certain questions of history, or copied a page of prose or poetry which had struck her, in order to read it again. A month before her death she attended a concert organized by one of her friends. All this combination of amiable qualities constituted an originality of temperament that was perhaps somewhat "Britannic." At the same time, it is plain that her joyous spirit was none the less deeply religious, from the ease with which she instinctively rises from the consideration of outward things to the thought of God.

I will here glean a few pages from the "Journals" kept by Miss Lechmere when travelling. These show her early habit of seeing everything with the eye of faith.

In 1852 she is at Cologne.

“ My room overlooked the Rhine. As I could not sleep, I spent some time watching the broad river in the pale light of the moon. Many other lights reflected in the water, scattered on its surface long trails as it were of fire, thus adding to the beauty of the scene. All at once I heard a bell ringing for Office at some convent. It was the voice of Our Lord calling His spouses to sing His praise. How sweetly the silvery sound came to me from across the river ! I lifted up my heart to my Divine Lord, and in the silence prayed Him to grant the only wish I have here below, by making me wholly His own.”

In 1854, after saluting “ La Belle France ” from afar, she arrives at Paris, in company with two of her devoted friends. She is charmed with everything, especially some religious paintings.

“ I visited the Louvre, and was enchanted. I saw there the splendid ‘ Immaculate Conception ’ by Murillo, which is the perfect ideal of purity. The Blessed Virgin is represented with her eyes raised to Heaven. She seems as if saying : ‘ Behold the handmaid of the Lord ; be it done unto me according to Thy word.’ How heavenly is the grace and purity of her expression ! how overflowing with Divine love ! It is truly the glorious work of a religious and Catholic genius. Murillo, in fact, was very pious. Before painting a picture of Our Lord or of Mary, he went to Communion, and invoked the Holy

Mother of God, asking her to inspire him with an idea of her beauty and goodness, or that of her Son. In this respect I infinitely prefer Murillo to Raphael, for, admirable as Raphael is, too many of his paintings of the Most Holy Virgin are the idealized portraits of very despicable women."

Further on, during the same journey to Vienna, she visits Leipzig. The following lines may be found less "simple," but they are quoted to indicate the movement of the soul towards God.

"We passed by Leipzig, and saw at a distance the monument erected on the field of battle. One contemplates with melancholy interest a spot where so many brave hearts have ceased to beat for ever ; where so many men have quitted the battle-field to find themselves in the presence of their God, after being, alas ! so little prepared for the terrible account we all must render one day. The grass grows green, the trees are full of foliage and bloom where lay so many slain. All is now calm and silent where violence and slaughter reigned. With the exception of a few whose names have been recorded, no one knows or cares aught about those who perished. Let us hope that not a few found pardon and mercy at the hands of their Creator, before Whom they appeared straight from the fire of battle. Such were my thoughts and prayers when crossing the field where death had wrought such havoc, and where so many brave soldiers found the place of their last sleep."

Arriving in Austria, Miss Lechmere writes :

“ The road hither from Dresden is singularly beautiful, and after entering Austria—one of the most Catholic countries in the world—a Calvary or a chapel is to be seen in all the most picturesque spots, to remind the traveller that, whilst journeying through a foreign land, he is daily nearing his heavenly home. Oh ! how beautiful in the eyes of a Catholic are these wayside shrines, amid surroundings of such wondrous loveliness, raising our thoughts to Him Who has given us so many joys on earth, while bidding us remember that by His death He won for us a country infinitely fairer than the fairest here below.”

“ We are approaching Prague, which, with its spires and minarets, presents the aspect of an Oriental city.”

I here quote only the account of a visit to the Ghetto :

“ I entered the Jewish Quarter, and visited the cemetery and synagogue, which are equally renowned for their antiquity and dirt. The foulness and gloom of the old synagogue defy description, and the new one is scarcely an improvement in either respect. As for the evil odours in the streets, and the general uncleanness of the inhabitants, they make one eager to breathe Christian air again ! On our way thither we met the Most Holy Sacrament being taken to a sick person. Alas ! the car-

riage passed too quickly to allow any outward sign of love to Jesus, but from the depth of my heart I adored His holy and beloved Presence. What a contrast it was, after meeting the Lord Jesus, to enter the quarter where dwell those who were once His chosen people ! Alas ! how dirty, degraded, and miserable are these descendants of the ancient people of God ! What a terrible fulfilment of the awful imprecation, 'His blood be upon us and upon our children !' and how the curse seems to weigh upon them throughout the 1,800 years that have elapsed since they crucified their Lord and Saviour !"

The travellers arrive at Vienna, visit with delight museums and picture-galleries, and next day attend Mass at the *Hof Kapelle*, where they are charmed with the music.

"It always seems to me that God Himself must have inspired the great masters to write for His special glory the exquisite music which adds so much to the beauty and solemnity of the Church's Liturgy. I love to regard in this light the works of art of different Catholic nations, and to see in the works of a Perugino, a Murillo, a Francia, a Fra Bartolommeo, the outcome, as it were, of the Catholic spirit. I like to think that God is glorified by the masterpieces which help to adorn the churches where He is pleased to dwell in the Holy Sacrament of the altar."

Quotations might be multiplied, but let us now follow our traveller in a last visit to the cathedral of Vienna.

“ We ended our walk with a farewell glance at the cathedral, of which the splendid Gothic spire stood out clearly defined against the deep azure of the starry sky. When passing in front of the church, I knelt before a statue of Jesus crowned with thorns, telling Him again that I had given my heart to Him, and longed to love Him more and more.”

From a psychological point of view it may be of interest to place side by side with these pages, written in youth, some passages from the writer's correspondence during the closing years of her life. They show that, in spite of an interval of forty-five or fifty years, her heart retains its youthfulness almost unimpaired. There is always the same grateful readiness to enjoy, with a sense of the approving smile of God, the fair things of earth and the kindness of loving friends.

In a letter dated Florence, 1896, she writes :

“ I have spent a delightful time at Florence. The weather is very fine, and the galleries are charming. I have been indefatigable. The churches are full of magnificent frescoes by Fra Angelico and other great painters, and in the galleries one can admire the most beautiful works of the Florentine School. Most of the subjects are sacred, or else portraits. I could never tire of looking at them. You know

I am a little ' off my head ' on the subject of Italy, the marvels of art and the beauties of Nature to be seen there, so my nine days at Florence have slipped too quickly away."

In 1897 she is at Nice.

" On the 1st of January, after Mass and Communion, I went with some friends on an excursion to Antibes. The weather was like summer. We had lunch on the grass, with a magnificent panorama before us : on one side the bay, a sheet of azure ; on the other the mountains ; the coast, with all its little towns and villas, surrounded by woods and gardens. There were roses in profusion, stately palm-trees, orange-trees covered with blossom, and, beyond all, the superb range of the Maritime Alps, their peaks covered with snow. One never could weary of admiring this enchanting scene, and, as always, I thought of you."

In another letter of the same period she writes :

" The beauties of Nature at Nice lift the soul to God. You cannot imagine what I feel at the sight of the Mediterranean—so deep a blue, and with great waves that break upon the shore. It gives some idea of the beauty, immensity, and strength of God, and raises the soul to contemplate Him."

Even the ceramics and jewellery displayed at the Exhibition of 1889 have the same effect upon her mind.

“ I find that these exhibitions impel one’s thoughts towards God. If man can execute such wonderful things by means of the intelligence or genius God has given him, what must be the magnificence of the Creator, when we behold Him in all His majesty and beauty ?”

We will next quote some letters from Rome, where she stayed on several occasions.

“ I hope you will have a happy Christmas. Here it is very cold, with a bright sun. I cannot tell you what a charming scene the piazza of St. Peter’s presents at this moment. Thousands of pilgrims, poor country-folk in the most picturesque costumes imaginable, variegated with red, yellow, and all sorts of vivid colours, and in the midst of this crowd one sees everywhere the habits of Religious Orders—Trinitarians, Dominicans, Franciscans—without counting the various colours worn by different seminarists. All this multitude, with its surroundings, in the dazzling splendour of Italian sunshine, makes a wonderful picture. I was present at the benediction of the pilgrims by the Pope. . . . The dear *Santo Padre* looks so well !

“ We are going to have a very lively Christmas. I am to attend midnight Mass at the convent of the English nuns close by, and High Mass at Santa Maria Maggiore, where the *Santa Culla* is to be seen—the cradle of our adorable Saviour. I have not yet been to the *Ara Cœli* to see the *Bambino*, but am going there this week.”

In another letter our pilgrim refers to the past.

“ Poor Rome—the Rome that I loved so dearly—is gradually disappearing. Demolition is going on in all directions, and some of the ancient quarters are entirely gone. In consequence of the spoliation of the Religious Orders and the churches, many beautiful things are being ruined in the convents by reason of their poverty and damp. One sees on all sides enormous houses begun, but left unfinished for lack of funds; huge, barrack-like buildings, occupied by the poor, with festoons of shirts and all sorts of garments hanging from the windows. They would pull down the Castle of Sant’ Angelo itself if they could! Frankly, Rome has lost much of its charm for me who can remember the Rome of 1858!”

About the same time she writes :

“ After Mass I went to the library of the Vatican. It is magnificent. Merely to walk round it takes a quarter of an hour. The walls and ceilings are adorned with beautiful frescoes, and the glass cases contain many things of immense value which have been presented to the Holy Father. Amongst these are splendid manuscripts, illuminated Missals, a book by St. Thomas Aquinas, written with his own hand, and the copy of Dante transcribed by Boccaccio. There are also some letters of Anne Boleyn, the treatise of Henry VIII. in defence of the Real Presence—in fact, the list would be interminable.”

In a letter of 1902 we find :

“ The King of England goes to-day to the Vatican. No King of England has been to Rome since Alfred the Great\* and his father, King Ethelwulf, more than a thousand years ago. Would that I could be a little mouse in a corner, to witness this meeting of the two greatest Sovereigns in the world ! The King will assuredly receive the dear Pope’s blessing. Oh, that the grace of God might descend upon him with this benediction ! Who knows but that England may one day return to the Catholic Faith ? . . . ”

She writes later on :

“ I have had to make three very painful sacrifices : First, the reception of the English pilgrimage at St. Peter’s, a magnificent ceremony, and the Holy Father gave his blessing. Second, on Monday a splendid reception given by the Duke of Norfolk at the Hôtel de Rome, to which all the pilgrims were invited. Four Cardinals were present, and a number of people most interesting to meet, many of my friends among them. I should have enjoyed it all so much, and it would have been something so pleasant to remember. Lastly, and hardest of all, I was unable to go to the audience of our beloved Holy Father at the Sistine Chapel—an audience for which I had a special card. I could not help

\* Alfred, the fourth son of Ethelwulf, was sent to Rome in his fifth year, and was there “ consecrated King ” by the Pope. He again visited the Eternal City, in company with his father, in the year 855.—TRANSLATOR.

shedding a few tears, I was so disappointed, but I offered up all my disappointment for the Religious Orders in France."

And again :

"I have had another ! Mme. B—— took fright at the crowd there might be at the splendid ceremony at St. Peter's, and so effectually that I had to yield to her reasons, although there was really no danger. After all, I offered it for France, and when one is over seventy-five years of age, it is time to prepare one's eyes for other processions, in comparison with which those of earth will appear very poor and miserable. I hope the time is approaching when Our Lord will assign me some little corner in Heaven, from whence I may see the hosts of Angels and Saints in adoration before His Divine Majesty. So I comfort myself ; but the tears came into my eyes when we heard from those who were present how glorious it was, and that the crowds had caused no difficulty."

My mother's delight in beautiful functions was almost equalled by her keen enjoyment of congenial society, as may be seen from the following extract :

"Just now there are many people in Rome whom I know, particularly the Ambassadors from Spain and Portugal to the Holy See. The Spanish Ambassador, Mme. Merry del Val, has known me from the time of my conversion. She was then quite

a child. The evening before the day I was to be received into the Church, I paid a visit to her parents. They told her that she must pray for me ; and I remember seeing her kneel down in the little chapel, and remain there quietly for some time in prayer. It makes me so happy to have met her again. Lady Denbigh and Lady Herbert of Lea are also here, as well as Cardinal Vaughan. Yesterday I went to a reception given by Mme. d'Antos, wife of the Portuguese Ambassador. Truly these Roman palaces are splendid, with their grand staircases of marble and their vast halls. Indeed, my sojourn here has been altogether delightful in every way. I am going to drink the waters of Trevi, for I hope to return again to Rome."

Another day she writes :

" I had a great pleasure yesterday. I went to dine quietly *en famille* at the French Embassy. M. and Mme. Nisard are most kind. The palace is splendid ; our house at Boulogne might, I believe, be put into the great drawing-room. There are four of these spacious rooms, one beyond the other, and all splendidly furnished.

One of the guests was the Duke di San Martino. He promised to let me see the Palazzo Farnese, where he lives. He has charge of the affairs of the Queen of Naples and of the family of the ex-King. He is a little man with a thin voice, and is very old, but so amiable ! He talked to me for a long time."

She says in a letter written during her last visit, in 1895 :

“ This afternoon I went to see the dear old Cardinal Macchi, and stayed half an hour with him. How good and kind he is ! I told him about my conversion. I also told him that my mother was for twelve years Maid of Honour to old Queen Charlotte of England. I spoke long about your dear father, and mentioned that I have some hair of the Duchesse d'Angoulême which she herself had given him. The Cardinal was most kind. Italians generally have charming manners and an air of great distinction. He did me the honour of giving me his arm and escorting me to the door.

“ You see that ‘ my attendants ’ watch over me carefully, and do me honour in ways to which I have no claim, but in all things I feel more and more that Our Lord and Our Lady are my Protectors. I assure you it is quite extraordinary how many people there are who, without knowing me, endeavour to do me a service, and it is much the same everywhere.”

To complete the picture, it would be necessary to say more on the subject of my mother's relations in regard to her intimates and acquaintances, but it need only be said that until within the last months of her life she gratified her hospitable instincts by habitually receiving her friends and exerting herself to make her receptions bright and enjoyable.

Needless to say, she was ever watchful against any breach of charity. One of her dearest friends said, on hearing of her death : “ I knew her intimately for many years. Her conversation was full of life and character, and it was pleasant to hear her merry laugh, but I never heard her say an uncharitable word.”

The week before her death she wrote, in spite of her weakness, a few farewell words to many whom she knew. She also received a certain number of her friends, with marks of great affection, and with a kind and cheerful word for each. To an aged friend who, like herself, had for some time walked with difficulty, she said with a smile : “ Courage ! only think how well we shall walk when we get to Heaven !”

In her thoughtfulness, she even dictated to me the addresses of several friends at a distance to whom she wished me to send *lettres de faire part* announcing her death.

## IX

### SPIRITUAL CONSOLATIONS

OUR Lord does not usually permit earthly trials to be without some spiritual alleviation ; and when He deigns to lay upon us a larger share of His Cross, the more tenderly He strengthens us with His consolations. To my mother, who had suffered so much for the Faith, He seems to have given an abundant source of comfort in her great love of the Church.

First and foremost was her deep joy at having been led to the true Faith. The story of her conversion expresses this over and over again. Indeed, one might say that, in season and out of season, she reiterates these expressions of gratitude for the happiness of living and dying a Catholic, and wishes that everyone she loves could share it with her.

In the most trifling, as well as in the most painful circumstances of life, she recurs to the same thought. For instance, a will is opened in England, in which she had an equal claim with other near relations to have been remembered. Their names are duly mentioned, but hers does not appear. Though

feeling keenly the humiliating omission, she wrote :  
“ What consoles me and makes me almost glad is the thought that my Faith is probably the cause of my being disinherited. It is very sweet to suffer loss because I am a Catholic. It seems to have made me love the Church with a deeper love than before.”

This love of the Church, from the time of her conversion in 1850, had its concrete object in the See of Peter, and drew its strength from her meditation on the words, *Tu es Petrus*.

A diary kept during a journey to Italy in 1857 gives her first impressions of Rome :

“ The next stage brought us across the wild and desolate Campagna to the Eternal City. Nothing could have been more favourable to our enjoyment of the scene than this contrast.

“ When for the first time one descries Rome in the distance, one feels much as the pilgrims of past times felt when they first sighted Jerusalem. For my part, when I beheld the city whose soil is saturated with the blood of martyrs, and whose very stones recall the earliest ages of the Church, I could not but remember the noble passage in the *Gerusalemme Liberata*, where Tasso sings of the Crusaders before the walls of the Holy City. Very early next morning I went to St. Peter's, to pay my first visit to the most illustrious of all churches.

“ On Sunday I went with Mme. B—— to the

Sistine Chapel, where High Mass was celebrated in presence of His Holiness. It was a superb ceremony. The scarlet robes of the Cardinals; the *Mon-signori* in violet; the Religious in the habits of their Orders; the Swiss Guards in the uniform of red, black, and yellow, designed by Michael Angelo; the Noble Guard in blue; the *Cameriere Segreti* in their short Spanish mantle and stiff collar, made altogether a most picturesque and varied scene. The Sistine Chapel is splendid in itself, and on entering, one is at once struck by Michael Angelo's tremendous fresco of the Last Judgment.

“ His Holiness was vested in a magnificent cope of crimson and gold, and wore a mitre. I was very near to him, and could therefore see him perfectly. He has a most distinguished air, and the expression of his countenance is very kind and noble.”

Further on the “ Journal ” gives an account of an audience :

“ At four o'clock in the afternoon Miss W—— and I had an audience of the Pope. The Holy Father received us standing. By his side was a table with a silver inkstand upon it. His cassock and biretta were white. He wore a gold chain and cross. His shoes were scarlet, embroidered with gold. On entering his presence, visitors make three genuflections, and (usually) kiss his foot (*i.e.*, the cross worked on his slipper), as well as his hand. He

asked if we spoke French or Italian, and we said : ' French.' He then said : ' You are Catholics ?' I told him that I was a convert. ' Were you converted this winter ?' he asked. ' No, Holy Father ; seven years ago !' ' Oh, then, you are quite an old Catholic.' He then gave a little exhortation to Miss W—— on the necessity of praying that she might know the truth, after which I knelt again to receive his blessing."

These three extracts from the " Journal " of 1857 appear to me to show the impression that Rome had made upon my mother—as the city of Saints ; the city of the grand Catholic ceremonies, which appeal in the first place to the heart and to the faith, but also to the imagination, by their artistic beauty and symbolism ; lastly, as the city of the Popes.

My mother paid several visits of some duration to Rome. Many of her letters relating to them have disappeared, and the extracts given later on are taken from those written in the course of her last years upon earth.

In the Eternal City, the pious pilgrim seems to have received from Our Lord many precious consolations to soften the trials of her declining years. It was these she appreciated above all, without losing her interest in poetic associations and historic monuments.

Three years after the death of my father, in 1906,

she visited Rome with one of her nieces. It may be of interest to compare the first impressions of that date with those of 1857. It seems to me that indications may be perceived in them of what was going on in her soul. All the extracts I am about to quote are contemporary with her letters on self-renunciation and penance.

“ I was very glad to receive a few lines from you on my arrival in ‘la Città Eterna di Roma.’ In my opinion there is nothing on earth to compare with Rome. I wish with all my heart that you were here with me, that I could show you some of its marvels. I say *some*, for to see all would take many years.

“ The first thing I did was to make a good ‘station’ at St. Peter’s, praying for the soul of your father, and for your intentions and those of your sisters, etc.”

Then, after describing some religious festivities, a visit to the tomb of “ the beloved Pio Nono,” and an excursion to the Villa Adriana and its famous waterfall, she continues :

“ It is impossible to say how happy I am to be in Rome. I hope my stay here may bring me many graces, especially a great increase of faith. One feels here what a blessing it is to be a Catholic : it is a favour beyond comprehension. God grant that I may profit by it and be more faithful and united to Him. If only you were with me, what

joy it would be ! But I console myself with thinking of what you will see in Heaven beyond anything that I shall see ; for certainly you and your sisters will there be placed much higher than your poor mother will ever be. But God will let me see you all, and understand your happiness in being of the number of the virgin souls who ‘ follow the Lamb wheresoever He goeth.’\*

“ I am glad my letter to Mme. Stéverlynck gave her pleasure. I prayed for them at the ‘ Confession ’ of St. Peter, but if she could see her son’s happiness, how she would be comforted ! Heaven is the balm for all our pains and sorrows. When I think of your dear father, my tears flow ; and yet I would not bring him back to earth—no, not even to Rome. . . . After all, the splendours one sees here are but a little dust in the sight of Heaven, and therefore, greatly as I delight in the beauties of art and Nature and in grand ceremonies, I often try to lift my soul above them all, to God. Oh, dear Henry, ask for me that I may advance in virtue more and more, may be more closely united to my Lord and Saviour, Jesus, and may prepare myself for a good and holy death when my hour shall come.”

The letter finishes in Italian :

“ Addio, carissimo Enrico mio : ti amo di tutto il mio cuore e sono di te la madre amantissima,

“ LOUISE.”

\* Apoc. xiv. 4.

For Mme. d'Arras, as for every child of the Church, the supreme reason of her love for Rome was because there Peter dwells in the person of the Vicar of Christ. Her correspondence is full of this thought. Also an anecdote, told me with some amusement by my mother, will testify to her sentiments in regard to the Sovereign Pontiff.

On one of her last journeys she was at a *table d'hôte* (I forget where), when one of the guests spoke slightly of the Pope, and expressed his opinion that the Papacy had had its day, and that in a few years it would have disappeared altogether. My mother, though at some distance from the speaker, had followed his remarks with increasing indignation. At his last declaration she could contain herself no longer, but, raising her voice, addressed the prophet of evil : " I beg your pardon, sir ! It is quite certain that ' in a few years ' you and I ' will have disappeared altogether,' for we shall be in our graves ; but it is no less certain that, long after we are nothing but dust, it will still be said, ' The Pope is dead : long live the Pope !' The Popes die, but the Papacy will last as long as the Rock on which the Church is built. Now, you know—or perhaps you do *not* know—Our Lord's promise to St. Peter that the gates of Hell shall never prevail against His Church : her enemies will disappear ; the Pope will remain !"

The poor man, somewhat bewildered, did not

say a word to break the silence which, for some moments, followed this episode. He may have thought it more prudent not to enter into discussion with a lady whose eyes still flashed with the light of battle. And now we will follow the pilgrim again to Rome.

“ I went to the audience given to the French Pilgrimage. At first I feared I should be placed where I could see nothing, so I addressed myself to one of the Cameriere Segreti : ‘ I am the widow of a Cameriere Segreto, and my son is a Jesuit at the college at Boulogne.’ ‘ Indeed ! I was educated at the Collège Notre Dame myself !’ He does not know you, but he knows Fathers du Coëtlosquet and Couplet, well. He is the Comte de Loppinot. He most kindly obtained for me a card from the Maestro di Camera, which gave me the right to a place in the front row. I could see our beloved Holy Father perfectly. When he was seated on his throne, the dear old Cardinal Archbishop of Paris read him a long address, enumerating all that he had done for the Church during his Pontificate. He spoke of France, of what is taking place at Montmartre, etc. The Holy Father replied ; then another Cardinal—I think it was Cardinal Mathieu—read a second address. Then the Holy Father gave us his benediction. He was standing, and when he extended his arms, it seemed as if he enfolded us all in this paternal gesture. He is in

excellent health ; his voice is strong. I think he still has some five or six years before him. And he himself has a presentiment of longevity. Seven years ago, a Bishop who was leaving for a distant mission expressed at parting a fear that he should never see him again. ‘Come back in seven years,’ said Leo XIII., ‘and you will find me still here.’ The Bishop returned, not many days ago.

“Yesterday” (Sunday) “I had a most delightful audience of the Holy Father. I must tell you all about it. On Thursday I went to see Monsignor Bisleti, the Maestro di Camera, who received me most kindly. I asked him for a ticket for an audience on Friday. ‘Not Friday,’ he said, ‘but Sunday. Come at eleven o’clock, and I will send someone with you to put you in a good place.’ I was there at the time fixed, and was given in charge of one of his secretaries. I took his arm and we crossed the Cortile San Damaso, and mounted by the lift to the Loggie di Rafaello, which lead to the Throne Room. There a place was given me in the first row. Four steps only separated me from the part railed off near the throne. I could see and hear the Holy Father perfectly ; then, after he had ended his discourse, I was presented to him, kissed his dear hand, and asked a blessing for my children in Religion. He answered : ‘I bless both you and your children.’ Is it not a privilege and an honour ? I know not why everyone is so kind to me at Rome.”

Again : " I have seen our beloved Holy Father to-day for the last time. I was quite near him, and felt much moved, for I shall only see him again in Paradise. To-day was the anniversary of his coronation, and he was present at Mass in the Sistine Chapel. I had a card of admission to the Sala Ducale, through which he passed when it was ended. He wore the tiara. What a keen look he has ! I have seen him five or six times since I came to Rome."

When my mother visited the Eternal City for the last time, Pius X. had succeeded Leo XIII. Her letters of that period contain some interesting details respecting the new Pope, but I will only quote her account of the last audience she ever had, and perhaps the most consoling.

" I sit down at once to give you, while they are still fresh in my memory, the details of my private audience, which took place to-day, May 12. At eleven o'clock I went up in the lift to the Holy Father's apartments. I first passed through three or four magnificent halls, where the different guards—two splendid Palatine Guards and others—were at their posts. On reaching the Sala dei Arazzi, I saw there two Monsignori and five or six officers in full uniform, besides two members of the Pontifical court, in court dress and plumed hats. I rested there for some time, and then passed through several more noble halls, where Monsignor Bisleti came

to meet me, and after traversing three or four beautiful rooms, we reached that of the Holy Father. On entering his presence I wished to kneel, but Monsignor Bisleti said, 'Stand up!' The Holy Father also forbade me to kneel, and made me sit down in an easy-chair by his side. I conversed with him in Italian. 'What a joy it is to me, Santo Padre, to find myself at the feet of Your Holiness! To see you, His Vicar, makes me feel as if I were in the presence of Jesus Christ!' Monsignor Bisleti told him that three of my four children are Religious—a Jesuit, a Carmelite, and a Little Sister of the Poor. I said also that at this moment I am lodging, in my own house and another, several of the evicted French Jesuit Fathers. I asked a blessing for you four, then for all *my* Jesuits, and lastly for Marie, who is soon to take her solemn vows. The Holy Father said: 'I grant all possible blessings,' and, 'Una benedizione specialissima per la piccola suora.' He thanked me for my offering, and said: 'I bless you for all the good that you have done, and for all that you may yet do.' I thanked him for his kindness, and also expressed my gratitude to Monsignor Bisleti. Then, after again kissing His Holiness's ring, I withdrew. I did not take anything for him to sign. Some people do. They too readily forget that he is a Sovereign. I hope, for my part, that I did not fail on any point of etiquette, and that I treated him with the reverence that is his due. I wore a handsome dress of black brocade, a Spanish

mantilla, and a diamond necklace that belonged to my poor mother. The Holy Father wore a cross of emeralds, and his ring was a sapphire encircled with diamonds."

My mother, who took so much pleasure in all beautiful things, delighted especially in the grand ceremonies of the Church and in the cycle of the liturgical year. The seasons of her greatest predilection were Advent, Christmas, and Passion-tide.

The Offices of Holy Week had for her an especial charm. She was never weary of attending them. At Rome in particular she spent her days chiefly in the churches ; indeed, her life there was a succession of liturgical feasts.

"On Thursday I went with a friend to the catacomb of St. Priscilla. There was being celebrated the Feast of St. Felicitas, who saw her seven sons martyred, before suffering martyrdom herself. Friday, the Feast of St. Catherine of Siena, I went to Santa Maria Sopra Minerva, the splendid church of the Dominicans, visited the chamber of the Saint, heard Mass, and went to Communion ; was also at the High Mass, said by a Cardinal. *Sunday*.—A great festival at the Ara Coeli, for the coronation of the Bambino. It is one of the devotions of Rome. You should have seen the crowds ! We were packed like herrings in a barrel ; and when the Bambino was crowned, there were shouts of

‘*Bambino, Bambino!*’ on every side. People crowded even into the pulpit—you know how very large the pulpits are in Italy—there were gentlemen, and even a lady, besides a number of people on the steps! The Church was hung with crimson and gold, and lighted with thousands of candles. I counted 150 lustres. It was a wonderful sight. Yesterday was the great Festival of the Cross at the Church of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme. This church also was adorned with crimson and gold hangings. After Vespers there was procession to the crypt, where reposes the body of St. Helena. Then, from a balcony, the relics were exposed—a thorn of the sacred Crown, a portion of the Inscription on the Cross, and a large relic of the True Cross. All these were venerated with the greatest devotion. The multitude, which was innumerable, was largely composed of the peasantry and the poor. Then we had a long sermon, a procession, and the *Te Deum*. We were at the church from four till seven, but everything was so beautiful that I did not feel much fatigued!”

In another letter :

“ You will be pleased to hear that I was able to attend *all* the ceremonies of Holy Week at St. Peter’s without *too* much fatigue. It was very beautiful, but if ever I am at Rome again on *Easter Sunday*, I will never again go to St. Peter’s on that day.

We had crowds of Cook's tourists, the horrors ! I gave some of them something to think about ! I will tell you, sometime. . . . But what a joy it is to be in the City of the Saints ! I think I have visited 80 of the churches. There are 378."

" My mother was deeply interested," writes Sœur Thérèse de Jésus, " in everything connected with the ceremonies of the Church, and it was not simply because they gratified her artistic sense, but because it was a joy and delight to her to see God honoured by the admirable symbolism of the Liturgy. As a daughter of the Church she loved the grand offices and the liturgical prayers with a filial affection. Often I have heard her say : ' How I detest a heap of little books of sentimental devotions, where you find nothing substantial, and which are, to my mind, mere collections of spiritual confectionery ! People take these books to Mass, and go from one sentimental insipidity to another, instead of nourishing their souls with the noble prayers of the Mass itself, which are the Church's own prayers, and which help so effectively to unite us with the priest. And the Psalms ! I never hear the *In exitu Israel* without feeling deeply moved. There is so much to meditate upon in every word !"

How often, too, my mother spoke to me about the Mass, especially since my ordination to the priesthood. The moment that particularly impressed her was at the *Hanc Igitur*, when the

priest takes possession, as it were, of the Sacred Victim.

In a letter to Sœur Thérèse de Jésus, dated November 8 (year not named), she writes :

“ I meditated this morning on the ‘ great multitude which no man could number.’ At both Masses, and also at Vespers, I found great facility in prayer, and felt absorbed in the contemplation of Heaven. Our Lord in His terrible splendour, majesty, and beauty ; the Blessed Virgin ; the Magdalen ; the Apostles ; the shining millions and millions of the angelic hierarchy ; and, before the throne, immense circles of the elect, who when the *Gloria* was chanted bowed in deepest adoration before the Blessed Trinity. I prayed with all my might that my merciful Jesus would admit me into this multitude of His redeemed ones.”

With regard to the following quotation from the reminiscences of Sœur Thérèse, it is needless to say that I neither pretend to explain the fact nor to exaggerate its significance.

“ One day,” my sister writes, my mother went to some grand ceremony at St. Peter’s. On her way back she came to Carmel to see me, and I noticed that she was much agitated. ‘ Marguerite,’ she said, ‘ I want to tell you something, but it is for yourself alone. I do not know what happened to me this morning, but I have been strangely moved.

I was absorbed in the splendid ceremonies of to-day, which carried my thoughts to the glories of Heaven, when, raising my eyes, I saw in the cupola a great multitude, whose presence there remains inexplicable to me. Oh, what hosts I saw surrounding the Holy Father, but high above the tribunes and the faithful, in the sweep of the dome! . . . Even now I feel quite overcome by what I have seen."

In 1904 my mother wrote: "In growing old, I only think of Heaven"; and as those whom she loved disappeared one by one from earth, her thoughts more and more habitually followed them into Eternity. This appears increasingly in her correspondence, as also do the consolations granted to her by Our Lord in her faith in the Communion of Saints.

A few weeks after my father's death she wrote:

"My thoughts and prayers are constantly with your dear father. What comfort our holy religion has for us in the thought that we can bring relief to our beloved ones if they are still in Purgatory, and that they pray for us! In my grief and solitude I realize what a joy it is to be a Catholic, and how great a grace it is to possess the true Faith.

"The Holy Father's banner floats over our gate to-day for the Jubilee. How grand it will be in Rome! Five hundred English pilgrims passed through Calais the other day. They began by a

famous act of penance, for the sea was frightfully rough. I forget how many tickets have been distributed for the Mass at St. Peter's. I wrote to Cardinal Rampolla, the Secretary of State, to tell him of your father's death, and have received a very kind letter in reply. The Holy Father has prayed for him."

Letters relating to the death of a college friend of mine, the Rev. Father Colombier, in 1897; of a young student, Jean Langlois, in 1900, at Boulogne; and of an Ursuline nun, a former mistress of my sisters, are full of reflections on the nothingness of earth and the joys of Heaven. I quote from the concluding sentences of one of these:

"It is now seven years since your father died. In seven years I too shall probably be gone, and in a few years afterwards you will follow me. When I see so many people who seem to have no thought of the life to come, I cannot sufficiently thank God for the Faith, and for the holy career my children have chosen. I cannot understand why God has been so good to me, who am so unworthy. It will take an eternity to thank Him.

"God bless you, my dear son! I daily place you in the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and I hope one day myself to have a little nook in His fair Paradise. How little then our troubles here will seem, compared with all our joy! Every day I say this lovely prayer: 'Dulcissime Domine Jesu Christe, per

virtutem sanctissimæ Passionis Tuæ, recipe me in numerum electorum Tuorum. Amen.'

"I wish you a happy Easter. How time flies! Each day brings us nearer to Heaven. Yes, we are all *en route*, but you three are travelling by first class, express!"

## X

“LITTLE CHILDREN,” THE LOWLY, THE PERSECUTED

### *Spiritual Consolations.*

To one of her intimate friends my mother said one day, in a tone of mingled sadness and resignation : “I shall never know the joy of being a grandmother !” In any case, she did her utmost to supply the want, by an adoptive grand-maternity of very wide extent.

She said, smiling : “God has truly given me the hundredfold ; for my grandchildren are, on the one hand, all the poor old folks of Marie and Marguerite, and, on the other, all Henry’s pupils.” On the former she joyously lavished her open-handed beneficence, and the latter she “spoiled,” particularly the very young ones, like a veritable grandmother.

One of the most pathetic memories cherished by my mother of my college days was connected with the last moments of little Henri d’Haranguier de Quincerot. His family lived near Bourges, and the boy, who had been sent to Boulogne for his health, seldom had the happiness of a visit from any of

them on account of the distance. The Father Prefect asked my parents to let him go out with me, and they soon became very fond of him. In 1878 he had pneumonia, which developed into consumption, and he died in the college infirmary. My father and mother visited him daily, lavishing every care and kindness upon him. His death was a real grief to them, and to the end of her life she prayed for the soul of "dear Henri d'Haranguier" at every Communion.

The maternal affection she had shown to my comrades, some of whom usually spent their monthly holidays at her house, was later on extended to my pupils. Great was her anxiety that they should succeed in their examinations. The Father Prefect knew this, and asked the aid of her prayers, in which he had much confidence. Then began Rosaries, Communions, and penances, all offered for this intention.

"Tell me," she wrote, "in your next letter how many candidates the Father Prefect wants to be received? I like to tell Our Lord the exact number I specially pray for, and that He must not refuse me, because what I am asking is for Him and for His glory. Last time I found this plan very successful."

But it was when I was sent to the "Little College" of St. Joseph of Boulogne (Chanlaire) that the "grandmother" claimed more largely her rights and privileges, especially at the time of the First Communions of her "grandchildren."

The temporal side was not forgotten. She prayed that the number of pupils might increase. She sent from Nice oranges and chestnuts, "knowing that they will meet with approval at Chanlaire." When at home, she would invite boys whose friends lived at a distance to come to our house on holidays for tea. But her greatest treat was to make purchases in readiness for Christmas. With what delight I have seen her go the round of the fair, from stall to stall, for presents for her "grand-children," and when the time came, enjoying from a distance—for she was always in the South at Christmas—their pleasure at the sight of their Christmas-tree, bright with tapers and laden with gifts !

Needless to add that, in cases of sickness and anxiety, my mother's sympathy and aid were never wanting. This sympathy and readiness to be of practical assistance were brought out even more by her love for the poor.

From her early childhood my mother had been taught to "consider the poor and needy in their distress," for her father and mother were remarkably charitable. In bad weather, Sir Edmund would stop his carriage and make poor pedestrians in the rain get in and sit beside him, regardless of their apologies and excuses.

When, after her conversion, Miss Lechmere thought for a time that she might be called to the religious life, it was to the great Hôtel Dieu at Paris

that she first directed her steps. In after-life she recalled, not without emotion, the instances of self-denying and devoted care for the sick inmates she had there witnessed.

She one day accompanied a nun to the bedside of a poor man who had not long been admitted. He was devoured by vermin, which, in spite of all his nurse's care, had multiplied, and were running in all directions on the bed. The good Sister, with the tenderness of a daughter, washed, changed, and purified the poor sufferer, not only without the slightest sign of repugnance, but with the utmost gentleness, serenity, and tact, and as if her work were as agreeable to herself as it was honourable in the sight of God. "I, a recent convert," added my mother, "saw with my own eyes what heroic self-denial and delicate affection for the poor the Catholic religion can implant in a soul."

This lesson in religious charity sank deep into the young convert's heart, and in after-years, in her visits to the sick and poor, my mother felt a revival of her inclination for the life of a hospital Sister, with all its holy exigencies of humility and self-denial.

Many of her acts of charity will ever remain unknown except to God. "To say the truth," she said to one of her daughters who mentioned some good work or other, "I dislike to speak of these things. It is better to act upon the words of the

Gospel : ' Let not your left hand know what your right hand doth.' "

Could we question the many indigent folk she used to visit, in connection with the *Œuvre des Pauvres-Malades*, we might learn much ; but all, or nearly all, these witnesses of her good deeds must by this time have disappeared.

Happily, in her letters or conversation she would relate with amusement little incidents that had in them something of the picturesque without betraying all the secrets of her charity. For instance, almost always the shoes that she wore on going out were " promised " before she came in, in answer to the appeal of certain of her protégées. If the shoes happened to be new, they would ask in advance for a claim upon them, and say : " When they are *worn* shabby, I may have them, may I not ? "

In a letter from Lille in 1896 she speaks of her pleasure at having been asked by the Rev. Father Fievet, who interested himself greatly in the *Œuvre des Saltimbanques* (or " work " for the benefit of acrobats and mountebanks), to be godmother to two of these " artists " of the circus—a jockey of sixteen, and a worthy Englishwoman, his employer, who was of a very respectable age.

" The day after the Baptism," she writes, " we had the First Communion of the jockey and of another boy, several Communions besides, and a

marriage. You see, I have not been useless. I commend my godson and god-daughter to your prayers ; I pray for them every day, and hope to meet these two souls in Heaven.

“ I breakfasted with my godson, and have paid several visits to my elderly god-daughter, who keeps an ape, and who fairly hugs me in her embrace. Although I cannot say that she was very clean, I was glad to let the poor woman embrace me and show me her gratitude, for I thought it would do good to her soul. There is so much happiness in making oneself little with the poor, and in treating them with attention and respect. After all, this worthy old woman has a soul, just as I have, and in seeing that I was not ‘ proud ’ with her, she must have thought that, from religion, charity springs.”

This thoughtful apostolate of charity is her constant care. She writes to Sœur Thérèse de Jésus :

“ When I am travelling, I try to do good to hotel servants by thanking them pleasantly for their services, and showing interest in them and in their families, and I have often had an opportunity of relieving their minds in some way. Sometimes it is a widow, who promises me a visit from her children . . . you can guess why. But all that does them good. Noticing that I practise my religion, they may conclude that this is the

cause of my consideration for the unfortunate, and my compassion for their troubles. When, therefore, I arrive at certain hotels, the servants hasten to me gladly."

The year that she died she received, on New Year's Day, some grateful lines from three of her protégées. Her letter shows what she was in her visits to the sick poor.

" I have had a little letter from the young D——s, whom I knew as children when I used to visit their poor dying mother. One was then a baby, whom I have held in my arms. I helped them to be suitably clad for their First Communion, and tended them in an illness, etc., and they have always been so grateful. Their poor old grandmother, ninety years old, still comes almost every week for the little help I give her. I cannot say how much their letter has touched me. I do so love the poor !"

This love of the poor had its foundation in faith. One of my mother's letters presents it in an aspect by no means common.

From Rome, where she was enjoying the grand and beautiful ceremonies, she writes :

" For the great ' functions ' the churches are ablaze with lights, and hung with crimson and gold ; but what I particularly love at Rome are the congregations, where the poor and beggars, with great

people of the world and beautiful ladies, all kneel together. I may be an odd sort of person, but it is my great delight to find myself kneeling by the side of a beggar, or some poor woman. I feel then that I am indeed in the house of the Father Eternal, where all are His sons and daughters."

How many instances of her charitable deeds might be gathered from the Little Sisters of the Poor of Boulogne, Aix, Nice, Turin, and Florence! For of all these establishments of theirs she was the "Grandmother."

When staying at Aix-en-Provence, she took much pleasure in waiting on the old people every evening. "The poor old creatures," she writes, "were so pleased to see me again. But oh, what appetites they have! I was amazed to see what they can eat—more at one supper than I could manage in three days! And what piles of vegetables, and what thick soup!"

And the old folks had their festivals, on which days the "Grandmother" provided the sweets or other dainties. As it was known that it pleased her to be asked for things, care was taken not to deprive her of this pleasure.

"I am the victim of them all," she writes. "Let me give you a specimen: The *Sœur Assistante* wants caps; the *Bonne Mère* has not enough aprons; Marie wants trousers for her old men; the *Sœur lingère*, pocket-handkerchiefs for her old women.

I think there must be something in my face which makes me a victim ; they say to themselves that I have not enough energy to resist."

Again, she writes, in a playful letter :

" My visits to Marie and Marguerite always remind me of passing through a holy 'Forest of Bondy' [famous for its brigands and highwaymen]. And as for me, I let it be too plainly seen that I am happy to be so piously but so effectively 'fleeced' !"

It was not the Little Sisters of the Poor alone who had recourse to their "Grandmother"; the apprentices of Auteuil, Don Bosco's orphans, of Turin, the *Alumni* of the Assumptionists, the "White Fathers," and many more, knew that it was her happiness to make others happy.

On August 23, 1902, she wrote :

" I must tell you that I have bought another slave. He will be named Henri-Dieudonné if it is a boy, and Marie-Louise if a girl. I shall know later on. In Heaven these children will be indebted to me for their salvation."

A first slave had been bought for her by the care of the "White Fathers." "One day," said Sœur Thérèse de Jésus, "we were speaking of the Missions. Her face suddenly brightened. 'You don't know what I am so pleased about!' 'No, Mother. What is it?' 'I have been able to buy a little savage

for 500 francs [£20], and I hope God will enable me to buy three of them before I die. I shall be glad for all eternity to have been the means of saving these souls, and to know that the Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ was not shed for them in vain. So now I am mother to a little savage! I had to make some sacrifices to find the 500 francs, but I hope that my dear Lord will help me to buy the two others.' And she added: 'Dear, dear Lord Jesus! I feel so happy to give Him all I can!'

One of the great consolations of her closing years was to devote all her jewels to the Holy Sacrament or to Our Lady. After her death, all her jewel-cases were found empty. The marks of pressure left by the vanished necklaces, rings, and bracelets had about them a certain eloquence. As to the jewels themselves, God alone knows their destination. I know of some given to enrich a chalice or ciborium for a First Mass, also for a chalice in honour of the taking of final vows. Some are in Italy in the "treasure" of a Bambino or a Madonna. I believe a monstrance in the Dominican church of St. Stephen of Jerusalem and a reliquary of St. Thomas shared between them a necklace of amethysts, and I have a letter from the Archbishop of Bagdad, returning thanks for a pectoral cross and chain. To give as much as possible to the poor or to Our Lord was truly the dream of my mother's life. On the very day of her death, only an hour

before the Prayers for the Dying began, she had two of her handsomest dresses sent to the Association for Providing Vestments for Poor Churches, having already distributed almost all the rest of her apparel.

Among her many charities, one in particular gave her great pleasure.

When her eldest daughter was at Aix-en-Provence, the house had become too small for the increasing number of inmates. The Bishop, Monsignor Gouthe-Soulard, was anxious to build an additional wing, and my sister had asked for a contribution towards the cost. My mother's fortune did not allow of her doing much, but, still, the prospect of preparing a lodging for Our Lord, in the person of His poor, was most attractive.

A kind Providence smoothed the way. "This morning's post," my mother wrote, "has brought me a very great surprise;" and she goes on to relate how, in consequence of the death of one of the legatees, she finds herself in possession of an entirely unexpected inheritance. "Your cousin," she adds, "after having made me her heiress, changed her mind, probably because of my religion, and, after all, God has allowed me to inherit this money. It is money for the poor. Oh, how I thank God for His infinite goodness! Marie will be delighted. I shall be able to give her enough to build the new wing, and as for me, surely it gives me a claim on Heaven! God cannot refuse me an entrance

there after I have harboured Him in His poor on earth !”

Another letter adds : “ I have disbursed 30,000 francs [£1,200], but I have made my conditions : neither the Bishop nor M. Guillibert is to speak of this. I wish it to remain unknown, for I want no flattering words of men. . . . Besides, I am giving this sum to God, and not to Marie. Since God has been so good to me, I must make Him a present in return. Do tell Him, that as I am housing Him (in His poor) on earth, I trust Him to give me some *tiny* spot in His Heaven ! Tell Him this from me at your Mass.”

She had called the new wing at Aix her *Nunc Dimittis*, but Our Lord was to furnish her with fresh opportunities for giving.

When, in 1901, the Carmelite Nuns, exiled from France, went to Rome, a series of disappointments rendered the first installation very difficult. Sometimes the community were literally in want of everything. Their good “ Grandmother,” distressed by the state of things which her maternal eye quickly discovered, aided them in many matters about which they did not venture to ask help from anyone. She begged for them, and in countless ways contrived to succour them. I will mention one instance only. It is very characteristic.

Learning one day that the poor nuns were particularly “ straitened,” she went to the convent, and, with beaming face, said to Sœur Thérèse : “ My

darling, I have discovered a way to help you. It will be my 'Easter egg,' but don't breathe a word about it. I want to give Mother Prioress a surprise. I have an ancient book of great value. I am sending it to London to be sold, and the money will be for you !"

"In three weeks' time," writes Sœur Thérèse, "she announced the happy results of the sale. As only a short time before she had owned to me that she herself was rather 'straitened,' I begged her to keep part of the amount. 'Oh, as to that, no !' she exclaimed. 'I am not going to chip anything off my Easter egg. I will do without something myself, if necessary, but my Carmelites must have what I intended for them.' "

At that time the nuns had not resumed enclosure, and my mother took advantage of the circumstance to pay a visit occasionally to the whole community. On Easter Day she arrived, *en grande toilette*, to do honour to her "children." After a few moments she drew from her pocket an Easter egg, made of fine basket-work, and, presenting it to the Mother Prioress, begged her to accept it. It was opened, and beneath the bonbons were several bank-notes. And, Sœur Thérèse observes, "the joy of the giver added a special charm to her generous gift."

With regard to her minor donations, it would be as useless as it is impossible to enumerate them. I will notice one point only, which must have especially endeared her charitable deeds to the

Heart of the Divine Master, Who praised the widow's mite.

It was a cause of wonder to herself how she could manage to lay out so much in charity. "I sometimes ask myself," she said, with a smile, "if Our Lord does not slip money into my purse with His own hand." One thing is certain—that, by the strictest economy in all that related to herself, she contrived to add greatly to the portion of the poor.

"I have my dresses dyed," she said gaily to Sœur Thérèse, "and try not to wear them out, or my gloves, or anything else, faster than I can possibly help. Also, when I have nobody to dinner, why should I have any dainty for myself, unless on great occasions? I think of my children, who, for the love of God, have deprived themselves of so much, and of the poor, who have nothing at all. Of course, I am just like other people: when God sends me something agreeable, I enjoy it; but I have not the heart to seek nice things when I think of the privations of others."

One of her habitual economies might very justly appear to be a downright imprudence. Up to the age of seventy-six, in spite of infirmities which made it only possible for her to walk—if walking it could be called—by her determined strength of will, she went every year to Nice, and even Rome, without any attendant.

If any of us expressed anxiety at her venturing alone, she would say, almost reproachfully: "Why

should I be in the least uneasy? Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin know quite well that I deprive myself of a maid in order to give more to the poor and other good works. How, then, can I doubt that they watch over me?" And, with a smile beaming with trust, she added: "When I mount into a railway-carriage, I say to my Protectors, my *Attendants*: 'My dear Lord, my kind Mother, I trust to you. It is for your sake that I am alone.' Then I say the beautiful prayers of the *Itinerarium*, and am quite easy. Do you imagine that Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin cannot take better care of me than a maid? Nothing can happen to me; nothing *will* happen to me. I can assure you that God often shows me very plainly that He is watching over me!"

And in this view of the matter there was so much simplicity and faith that, after prayer and reflection, we did not venture to press the point, lest the measures prompted by the most elementary human prudence might, in this particular case of unbounded confidence, be displeasing to God, and lessen His fatherly protection.

My mother's well-known charity naturally inspired great confidence in the numbers of poor people who had recourse to her.

One day an old servant of the family brought her all his savings, begging her to keep them for him, or else invest them, as he was sure nobody would take such good care of them as she.

This same devoted old man had for years remained without wages in the service of a member of the family who had suffered reverses. In his old age he was attacked by cancer in the stomach. He had been suffering from this for some months, when one day he unexpectedly arrived at my mother's house, and said simply : " I was bound to come here ; I could not get the thought out of my head. It was as if God said to me, ' Go to Boulogne.' " He had not been many days with us, when he grew worse and took to his bed, and my mother had the consolation of procuring for him in abundance the spiritual aids which he would certainly not have had at his own home. She was deeply sensible of the " delicate attention of Providence, which allowed her house to be, as it were, a place chosen for the exercise of His grace. She had written, a few years previously : " If poor X—— should be ill, I foresee that she will be at my charge ; but I cannot abandon her, poor child ! If I nurse her and give her hospitality, God will not refuse me the hospitality of His Paradise. I want to do all I can to make sure of good *memoranda* in that book of God where everything is noted down. I could shed tears of happiness at the thought of a good account. I am sure my death will be calm and peaceful, and that God will then grant me the grace of all the Sacraments."

Another " great honour," to use her own expression, was reserved for this same house, when, in

1902, the Jesuit Fathers\* had to quit the Collège Notre Dame and disperse. It was a great happiness to her to receive a number of them—some in her own house and others in the house opposite, which was also her property. [At one time she thus lodged and provided for no fewer than fourteen.]

“How good God is,” she wrote, “to allow me to receive His representatives! . . . I no longer fear to die. Our Lord cannot shut the gate of Heaven against me, since He deigns to dwell in my house in the person of His sons.” And in another letter she adds: “Never let them speak of gratitude. It is I who am indebted to them, and thank them for the honour they are doing me. It makes me so happy to see them coming and going freely in my house! They sometimes say that I am their ‘Mother Abbess.’ I am very proud of the title.” And during her absence from Boulogne her letters often ended with: “The old Mother Abbess begs the prayers of ‘her children,’ whom she daily places in the Sacred Heart of Jesus.”

Many of her “children” left for the foreign Missions. Each parting was painful to her maternal heart. “I wish to see no more *beards* when I return,” she wrote; “that of Father Robichez is already one too many.” And again: “I went to see the Very Rev. Father Martin, General of the Company

\* Evicted and despoiled by the Antichristian French Government.—TRANSLATOR.

of Jesus, and spoke of my joy at having the Fathers, and my sorrow when they left." (It was when Father Demerval, my former Rector at Gemert, had been sent to China.) "And the Father General said to me: 'Pray, Madame, that all the Fathers may be martyrs or confessors.' I said I would pray that they might all be Saints, and even confessors, for the Faith; but as to being martyrs, I had not the strength to ask it: they were my children."

A letter from the "Mother Abbess" to the Rev. Father Demerval, S.J., sums up her sentiments in their regard:

"REVEREND FATHER,

"I heard with tears the sad tidings of your departure for China. Henry tells me to congratulate you, but how can I do so when I am grieved that you should go? But if you are glad to be sent to a country where so many holy men have found martyrdom, I ought to be pleased that you are happy.

"I consider myself very fortunate and greatly honoured in having been able to give you hospitality. I feel that in this God allowed me a share in the great favour that he granted to Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. I am very unworthy of it, but I thank Him for having chosen me from among so many others to shelter a few of His ambassadors on earth, and I hope that He will one day let me meet in Heaven those who have so loved and served Him.

“ I need not say, Reverend Father, that I will always pray for you. May you do much good in China and live in security ! But what a loss to those who love you ! Tears fill my eyes when I think of them.

“ I ask your blessing, Reverend Father, and beg to assure you of my deep veneration and affectionate respect.”

## XI

### FAVOURITE DEVOTIONS

THE reader will have already remarked that a great love of Our Lady was one of the first devotions aroused in Miss Lechmere when the light of faith began to enter her heart. We have seen the conclusions she drew from the words of the Angel's salutation, "*Ave, gratia plena, Dominus tecum; benedicta tu in Mulieribus . . . Spiritus Sanctus superveniet in te,*" etc., and the sort of Little Office she compiled for herself from the Antiphons of Our Lady, quoted with hostile intent in the Protestant book called *Virgin-Worship*.

We have also seen that the two sacred mysteries which most deeply impressed her were the Divine Maternity and the sufferings of Calvary.

A letter written in September, 1899, consists almost entirely of a meditation on the Feast of Our Lady's Nativity, September 8, in which she pictures the predestined Infant in the arms of her mother, St. Anne, contemplated by the Most Holy Trinity with infinite love, as the spotless one foreordained and fitted to become the Mother of the Eternal Son

of God ; and by the whole company of Heaven (as their future Queen), and by the Saints of the Old Law, who had desired to see the day of which she was the dawn. “ How is it possible,” the letter continues, “ that certain Protestants can refuse the honour which is her due, and look upon her as an ordinary woman—she who was prepared in the mind of the Eternal from the beginning, as the instrument of the Incarnation ? How can we think of her without love and veneration ? I thank God with all my heart for having enabled me to see Mary as she really is : a created being certainly, but above all other creatures, even the Angels. Pray that I may more and more fully comprehend her dignity, and love her ever more and more, for then I shall love more devotedly her Divine Son, my Lord and Saviour Jesus, and grow more and more closely united to Him.”

In another letter, December, 1896 :

“ What must it have been, even to the Immaculate Virgin herself, to hear the words of the Angel Gabriel, and then to know that the Holy One within her bosom was not separated from the Father and the Holy Spirit ! ( ‘ For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead corporeally ’—Col. ii. 9). How powerful she must be with God, and what ineffable love must unite the Mother and the Son ! Protestants who refuse due honour to her cannot have understood her title of *Mother of God*.”

Her meditations on the Passion also are full of the sorrows of Mary.

“One day,” writes Sœur Thérèse, “when my mother came to the parlour, the conversation turned on the sufferings of Our Lady when she followed along the Way of Sorrows, and saw the Blood of her Divine Son trickling to the ground, and being trodden on by the feet of the multitude. . . . And at this moment,” adds Sœur Thérèse, “my mother covered her face with both hands, to hide her emotion. Her tears flowed down, and she exclaimed : ‘ Oh, the Precious Blood of Jesus, how I love It ! ’ ”

In the trials of her later years, when, from one cause or another, she was separated from all her children, it comforted her to unite her loneliness with that of Our Blessed Lady when she no longer had the visible presence of her Son.

This devotion to Our Lady was full of filial confidence. “As to the Blessed Virgin,” she said, “I have long conversations with her. I hardly take a step without asking her help. I am afraid of falling ; I am afraid of the carriages, for I walk so very slowly. But then I say the *Sub tuum* ; I could not tell you how often I say it in the day ! ”

And her tone was full of tender affection when she spoke of “ My *dear* Blessed Virgin,” as she loved to call Our Lady.

One of the last consolations of the convert of

1850 was to consecrate her pen\* to the honour of the Immaculate Conception. The Rev. Father Watrigant, who had composed a form of prayers for the Jubilee of the Proclamation of the Dogma, asked my mother to translate it into English. Owing to delay on the part of the editor, the *Golden Treasury of the Immaculate Conception* appeared only a few months before the death of the translator.

In her intense devotion to Our Lord, besides dwelling especially on the great mysteries of the Incarnation and the Passion, she had a particular veneration for the Precious Blood, the Adorable Sacrament, and the Holy Face.

“ I do not find much difficulty in meditating on the Incarnation and the Passion. They are my favourite subjects—Jesus in the bosom of His Mother ; Jesus in the manger, so frail, so small, like all other infants—and this for *me*, to save me and bring me to Heaven !

“ In the Incarnation I find the whole of the Catholic Faith. Is not the Holy Eucharist the continuation of the Incarnation, and its fruit the Church ? And, then, how one loves Our Lady, how one comprehends her grandeur and magnificence, when one ponders the full meaning of the Angel’s salutation, and her consent to become the Mother

\* Mme. d’Arras had previously written some articles for magazines, and also stories for young people, such as *The Two Friends* (R. Washbourne, 18, Paternoster Row, London, 1878).

of her God and Creator ! You will pray for me that I may humble myself profoundly in contemplating my God, hidden in the bosom of Mary, and in reflecting that it was our sins which impelled Him to humble Himself thus.

“ . . . I am reading *Bethlehem*, by Father Faber. It is splendid. There are inexhaustible subjects to meditate upon in the Incarnation. To think that Jesus, in the poor cave at Bethlehem, is at the same time in the bosom of the Eternal Father ! that this little Infant never ceased to be the God Who will judge the world ! These mysteries are so profound that one could ponder over them for hours together.

“ Let us meet in spirit at the Crib, where we soon shall see the Holy Babe extending His little arms towards us. There we lose all fear. This sweet Infant is not come for our condemnation, but for our salvation, and to assure us of His love. . . .”

“ The Precious Blood,” my sister writes, “ was the object of her continual veneration. She composed a prayer in English to It, which testifies to the depth of her love :

“ ‘ O Fount of Sweetness, I adore you ! Suffer me, O my loving and beloved Lord Jesus, to kiss the sacred Wound of Your Side, and may I draw life from this priceless fountain. I desire to bathe my soul in You ; in You to purify my heart ; to worship You by every step I take—every breath, every sigh, every tear. O dearest Lord, help me to love You—

You who shed Your Precious Blood for me in the garden, at the pillar, on the Cross. Let it not have been shed in vain, O Jesus, but save me by Your Precious Blood. Teach me to love and adore It more and more, until I arrive where I shall worship It for ever.' "

Naturally this devotion to the Precious Blood could not be separated from an intense veneration for the Holy Eucharist. Many of her letters are full of expressions of her love of Jesus in the Tabernacle. I quote (almost at random) from one letter only :

" We have lately had the Forty Hours' Devotions at Notre Dame, with splendid sermons from the Dominican Father on the Eucharist as a remedy and reparation for the revolt of the intellect, the heart, and the senses. The subject was admirably developed, and touched me greatly. I often think of Faber's words : ' I seemed to behold the Precious Blood palpitating with love for my soul in the Divine Heart of Jesus.' And this is what I feel at the Elevation of the Sacred Host—the Precious Blood flowing as a stream upon my heart, and cleansing the wounds of my soul until they are white as snow. In Communion I offer all the beatings of my heart in adoration of Jesus in lonely tabernacles, where no one comes to worship Him, and offer each breath I draw as a prayer to ask Him, by His Precious Blood, to have mercy on me."

It may be remembered that the origin of her conversion was the feeling—inexplicable to her at the time—of the Divine Presence at the Elevation in the Mass.

Her love of the Holy Mass was fervent to the last. In her later years it needed a rare courage in order to drag herself, almost every morning, to church for Mass and Communion. Her rheumatism and other infirmities compelled her to rest from time to time while dressing. To be in time for the half-past seven or eight o'clock Mass, she was obliged to rise at five, or half-past at the latest ; but she could not endure to absent herself from the Holy Sacrifice.

“ I reminded her one day,” writes Sœur Thérèse, “ that daily Mass is not obligatory. ‘ I know that,’ she said, ‘ but I cannot understand how people can lightly dispense themselves from hearing Mass. I own that it saddens me to see so many young girls nowadays deprive themselves of daily Mass for the merest trifles. Holy Mass is the summary of all graces. Our Lord could not do more for us, but He is forgotten. Time can be found for everything except for Mass. My heart aches when I think of it, and it revolts me to hear people express astonishment that one should attend Mass daily.’ ”

She seems to have had an unusually vivid sense of the Real Presence :

“ When I am alone I speak to Our Lord, and tell Him everything. I seem to see Him smile upon

me. . . . I say the prayer of St. Gertrude that you showed me, and offer my heart as a grain of incense to the Sacred Heart, to be consumed in the fire of His love. My dearest Jesus! How He suffers! I offer my Communions to make reparation to Him.”

\*       \*       \*       \*

From Lille she writes, October 23, 1896 :

“I had an excellent journey from Paris. I may say that I was conversing with Our Lord a good part of the way. Most especially I saluted Him in all the poor dilapidated little village churches I passed, where He must remain alone, ignored and neglected. I offered Him all the beatings of my heart in adoration.”

Extracts might be multiplied, but in every variety of circumstance there is always the same note of reverent love and confidence towards Him Whom she loved to call “my dear Jesus.” She had also a great devotion to the Holy Face, and for years before her death kept a lamp burning before it (as represented in the veil of St. Veronica).

The following letter is characteristic of her respectful familiarity with Our Divine Lord ; it is of 1898 :

“I see that God has arranged everything beautifully. As for me, the more I can give, the better pleased I am. For you see I give nothing without asking God to let it be put down in His notebook, so that I may be able to say when I die : ‘ My beloved Lord, I have tried to solace You on earth, and I hope,

through Your mercy, for Paradise.' I am now seventy years old, so I must do as much good as possible, in order to have something worth offering to my Saviour Jesus. And then I make an agreement with Him. The other day I gave four ten-franc pieces to the Little Sisters, because their best cow died, and I said to Our Lord : ' For each of these ten-franc pieces give me a little boy for Chanlaire.' Already I have two, and do not doubt that He will give me the other two. Besides, I find that these playful little transactions with the Lord Jesus fill my heart with a very great love for Him. Dear, kind Jesus ! I seem to see Him so compassionate, so loving, even to Judas, who betrayed Him. (It was the subject of my meditation this morning.) How was it that when the Divine Master said to him ' Friend,' his heart did not break, and that he could refrain from throwing himself at His feet, Who even then would have shown him mercy ? . . ."

The beauties of Nature also never failed to inspire her with a sense of the Divine presence. She writes, in 1896, from Monaco :

" I am very comfortable at this hotel, quite near to a little church, where I hear two Masses every morning. Of an afternoon I often go to Old Monaco, to walk in that delicious garden on the top of the rock. There are benches everywhere. I sit in the full sunshine, facing a lovely view of the sea, and there I say my Little Office and the Rosary. As I

know no one here, I spend my days in silence, and am not sorry for it. The admirable beauty of Nature here carries my thoughts to God."

The thought of God had at times a singularly strong hold upon her.

"Often," my Carmelite sister writes, "I took my Bible to the parlour to ask mamma to comment on some passage in particular. One day I remember she exclaimed: 'Oh, Marguerite, what happiness it is to think and speak of God! It often happens to me that when I say: "My God," I can say nothing more. The word alone—*God*—thrills my soul!' And with tears in her eyes, she repeated 'My God,' unable to say more."

But the fundamental devotion of all in my mother's heart was certainly that of submission, trusting and loving submission, to the will of God.

In all circumstances, great or small, at least for the last thirty years or so of her life, the first instinct of her soul was to bow before it, and to say: "Thy will be done!" Not that conflicts were wanting. She had to wrestle strongly, especially against her own heart, and although generally successful in overcoming the occasionally violent impulses of her ardent disposition, she was not always able to dispel interior depression. Sœur Thérèse, the confidante of all her secrets, writes:

"There were days when her only consolation was to unite her suffering to that of Our Lord in His

agony in the garden. But in the deepest trials, which weighed upon her heart and seemed to crush her soul, she never lost her absolute trust in God. One day she said to me : ' I am so bowed down with grief that I can do nothing. I can only say *Fiat*—the only word that calms my soul.' "

Again, some time in 1896, she wrote to Sœur Thérèse :

" I know that I am very imperfect, and understand little of submission to the will of God : I am anxious about everything, and make myself unhappy, and what is the use ? You are right, I know : melancholy is bad for the soul, but it is very difficult for a feeling heart not to be sad. Still, it shows want of trust and submission, and I promise you that I will fight against it." " And," adds Sœur Thérèse, " she was energetic in her resolutions. She wrote later : ' By compelling myself to say *Fiat, Fiat*, my heart is content to abandon itself to the will of God. One should think of oneself less, and leave all in His hands. He knows that I love Him, and wish to love Him more and more.' "

## XII

### LAST TRIALS AND CONSOLATIONS

WE have seen how plentiful was the royal appanage of trials apportioned by Our Lord to the young convert of 1850. According to His Divine custom, He seemed, from 1905 onwards, to multiply her crosses, and so perfect His work of sanctification, and add its last and brightest jewels to her crown.

In October, 1904, my mother, in accordance with her yearly custom, started for the South of France, intending to leave for Rome in the following spring to see her dear Carmelite.

The events connected with the anti-religious policy of the Government had always affected her most painfully. To the deep distress this often caused her a severe trial was added this year by the alarming state of my eldest sister's health.

"Thanks, my dearest Henry," she wrote on February 10, 1905, "for your kind letter for my birthday. It came to comfort me a little. It is the will of God to mark my old age well with the Cross. I am grown very infirm, and the pain in my limbs scarcely allows me to put one foot before the

other, and carriages cost so much. And now I have had letters from Marie and the good Mother which distress me exceedingly.

“ I cannot tell you how *desolate* I feel ! I am so sad, and have no one here to whom I can open my heart. I weep much when I think of it, and it is hard to say *Fiat* in regard to so great a misfortune. Bless me, my dearest Henry—your poor old mother, who loves you with all her heart.

“ LOUISE.”

The illness of my sister becoming so serious that her life was in danger, we were obliged to let my mother know. This is her answer :

“ Your letter, my dearest Henry, as you may well believe, was like a dagger in my heart ; but I have long since said to God that I accept all He sends me, in expiation for my sins, and to gain Heaven. This morning I meditated on the Crown of Thorns. Some of these thorns it is His will to give me. I thank and adore Him. Somewhere in the Book of Job or the Psalms are the words, ‘ Yea, though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.’ Well, I adore Him ; and can I ever thank Him enough ? What mothers are they who can say to God, ‘ I offer you my four children ’ ? Do you not all belong to Our Lord ?

“ Ah, I foresee the coming separation ! My darling will go to Him. What a cross, O my God !

I desire, by His grace, to bear it with complete resignation to His holy will. This blow loosens me more from the earth, and I hope it will help me to live henceforth for God, and for God alone. No joy can now be mine except that given by religion. But, alas ! even for that my infirmity makes Holy Communion so difficult !

“ Perhaps now I had better give up going to Rome, even if I feel equal to the journey. That, of course, would be another heartbreak, for it would mean a definitive farewell to my beloved Marguerite. But since my heart is broken already, a little more breaking matters little, and possibly the sacrifice might be profitable for Marie.

“ Bless me, and pray for your poor old mother, who suffers much, but is quite resigned to the will of God.

“ LOUISE.”

The series of trials was not exhausted. After much hesitation, my mother resumed her project of going to bid her Carmelite, as she said, a last adieu. The weather had improved, and her health also. Captain\* and Mrs. Arthur Shirley, her nephew and niece, were going to Italy, and she would travel part of the way with them. This decided her, and the thought of seeing her Marguerite again gave her fresh strength and courage.

Alas ! at Mentone she took cold during a drive,

\* In the Royal Navy.

and woke next morning in acute pain from sciatica, which held her, incapable of movement, on her bed. But her physical sufferings were small in comparison with her disappointment.

A few extracts from her letters about this time will best express the feelings of this valiant soul under her trial.

In a letter dated April 8 she first expresses her joy because her nephew and niece have decided to remain with her till Easter, and then adds: "As for Kathleen, it is impossible to tell you how kind and how tenderly devoted she is. It is delightful to have her." Then, alluding to my regret at being unable to be with her, she continues: "Yes, I should indeed be glad, dear Henry, if you could be with me, *but* I believe I am still happier in the thought that you are toiling for the salvation of poor souls. Whenever I see what is going on in the world, or hear of what is being done, I feel more than ever thankful to God for the lot He has chosen for my dear children, and more grateful for a favour of which I am so unworthy. I fully accept God's will. Doubtless mine is a heavy cross, but how soon we shall all be reunited before God, and how glad we shall then be for all the trials which have led us to Him !

*April 18.*—"I am better, but still in much pain, and my limbs very weak. Rome, alas ! is impossible. I hoped against hope, but in vain. I cannot express the grief it is to me not to see Marguerite

again, but it is God's will. Besides, even if I could have gone, the final separation would have been so dreadful that perhaps God wished to spare me this. No one knows what agony it was, when I bade her adieu, to see her disappear behind the curtain and the grille, and everything was silent !

" I am distressed to hear that the Rev. Father-General's arm had to be amputated. I hope he is better. Can I write to Father Chandlery for news of him, or would it be troublesome? . . . Will you say a Mass for the intentions of Ma Sœur C. at Mons? I am not sure whether I remembered to mention her when I wrote to the convent. It would *grieve* me to hurt any one of those dear nuns, who are so devoted to Louise. And these little nothings sometimes wound people.

" My best wishes to my dear Jesuit ' children.' It is such a great privilege to have them in my house."

*April 20 (or 10).*—" It is indeed a grievous disappointment, and I cannot say what a sacrifice I am making, but with all my heart I repeat, ' Thy will be done,' and, with God's help, I will repeat it under whatever other trials He may send to purify me and fit me for Heaven. I know it is all for my good, and, happen what may, I will say the same. This is the only way I can manage to bear everything, and, indeed, it always succeeds, and I love Him more and more.

“ I unite my sorrow for not seeing Marguerite with that felt by Our Blessed Lady when she took leave of Our Lord on Calvary, and when He quitted her for Heaven.

“ She had then twelve long years to wait before seeing Him again.

“ Also, I reflect that at this present time, when so many poor unfortunates are suffering so much, why should I be spared ?

“ I hope your Beggars are giving you satisfaction. What a beautiful ministry yours is, and how proud I am to be able to say to God, ‘ My son has been the means of saving these souls and bringing them back to You ! ’ Oh, what has not God done for me ? Truly I can say, *Magnificat*. My infirmities now disable me from attending any worldly reunion, and I am happy to be enabled thus to live more for God.”

When the time came for Captain and Mrs. Arthur Shirley to quit Mentone, my mother, who had given up going to Rome, took up her abode at Monaco. Soon afterwards, however, it occurred to her that, by putting herself under the protection “ of our Dear Blessed Lady,” she might perhaps undertake the journey.

“ I hope,” she wrote, “ that God will let me get better. It would be a *hard* trial to continue in my present state, although I say with all my heart, ‘ Thy will be done ! ’ I can neither walk nor rise from my chair without difficulty and suffering ; but

the most trying part of it is that I can find no easy position when I lie down. I think my late trouble may have something to do with this, for I had the same pains after your father's death. In short, I have, taking all together, a very heavy cross. But oh, if only this may make me sure of Heaven, what matters all the rest? I cannot kneel, even for Communion, if the step is rather low, and to sit when praying seems so much less favourable to devotion.

"Give me your blessing, and pray that I may do what is best. Remember me to my dear 'children.'

"Your most loving old mother,

"LOUISE."

At the end of May she returned to Boulogne, completely infirm.

The joy of finding herself at home, and of seeing me again, as well as my brother Jesuits, whom she called her "children," consoled her somewhat. Also, Holy Communion was made easier for her. By permission from Rome, we were able to use a portable altar, and transformed the second drawing-room into a chapel.

With her lively faith, she keenly appreciated this favour. We often saw her, with tears in her eyes, looking towards the place where the Holy Sacrifice had been offered in the morning, and saying: "He deigned to dwell in my house!"

One day we had a more solemn festival. Monsignor Lavigne, the Missionary Bishop of Trincomalee, came to us on a visit. He daily said Mass for her in the drawing-room chapel, and it was there that he administered the Sacrament of Confirmation to an English lady whom I had received into the Church.

But all these consolations were to prepare her for another and a severe sacrifice.

Since the dispersion of the Jesuit Fathers, I had been living at home. On her return from the South, she consoled herself for the thought that she could never go there again, by the expectation of having me with her all the year. A few weeks later I learnt that I was to leave Boulogne in August. My mother had to be prepared for the news, but, in spite of all precautions, the blow was a very heavy one. She would be left alone, without hope of ever seeing her daughters again, and the home would be empty. She owned that at first this seemed likely to be the last of her trials, and a warning of the end.

She wrote to my Carmelite sister :

“ Thanks for your comforting letter. When I learnt what was hanging over me I felt utterly crushed. I would have written sooner had we not been daily expecting a letter from the Rev. Father Provincial, fixing the day for Henry’s departure. The suspense is very trying—as though I were con-

demned to the guillotine, and every knock at the door made me expect to be told that 'my hour was come.'

" Marie is ill ; I am too feeble and infirm to be able to go and see you ever again ; and Henry is leaving this melancholy house. It breaks my heart ! . . . Still, I wish to accept all, and kiss the hand of God, finding even a certain joy in suffering, for it does not seem possible that my Jesus will refuse to give me a place in His Heaven.

" When that will be I do not know, but perhaps this last blow is to prepare me for my approaching death, to which I look forward with a sweet confidence that, in spite of my miserable unworthiness, God, Who is so kind and merciful, will receive me to Himself.

" We do not know when Henry will leave. He awaits a telegram. . . .

" Alas ! dear Marguerite, since writing so far this morning, the telegram is come. Henry leaves on Monday. It will be a famous cross for me ; but, as Henry says, we must think of Heaven, and of Our Lord, the only source of consolation.

" The Fathers around me, and the Rev. Father Hoffmann, are all very kind, and this comforts me. Whether I die sooner or later, this painful trial will be very good for me. I cannot yet accustom myself to the thought of your brother's room being closed henceforth, and that my darling

will come no more, perhaps, for a long time to occupy it.

“In the Name of the Father, I bless you; in the Name of the Son, I bless you; in the Name of the Holy Spirit, I bless you; and I press you to my heart.

“ Your mother, who loves you dearly,  
“ LOUISE.”

During those last two days she was full of courage, and, in her desire not to afflict me by her sadness, professed a lively interest about everything at Florennes (my destination), the park, the neighbourhood, the banks of the Meuse, and pleasure that I should be where the scenery was so beautiful.

I left on August 7. She wrote to me on the 8th :

“ MY DEAREST HENRY,

“ My first thought on awaking was of you, and naturally it was very sad. But I am better than I was yesterday. . . . My thoughts followed you all day. After you were gone, the kind Father Flament also left me, after a few moments, to weep at my ease, and to rest awhile. Everyone sympathizes with me. . . . Also I thank God for giving me a son who will win so many souls for Him. . . . In these I too have my little share; and the rendez-vous will one day be a very joyful one. Do you remember a little picture you gave me on leaving

for Jersey: 'La vie est une continuelle séparation : le rendez-vous est au Ciel'? We little thought then how these words would be realized for me. This picture has never left me, and I value it so much that I wish to have it in my coffin. Dear Father Flament came this morning, and will come again this evening. I am sure he will be a real son to me, as St. John was to the Blessed Virgin."

*September 13.*—"I shall try to spend the winter well, in my own room. I have plenty of books, and a good book interests me and keeps away sadness. Besides, I mean to put my affairs in order, in case of my death."

*September 18.*—"I knew you would remember me on the 17th, your father's birthday. What a festival it used to be! What must it be for him in Heaven, and what will it not be for us in a few years' time? . . . The little carriage has been sent for at last. After much hesitation I decided to order it. It cost 300 francs. This is not too dear, but I am very sorry to spend so much on myself."

*September 30 and October 1.*—"I have walked to church three times: went to eight o'clock Mass and Communion. It was a great happiness!"

"Miss N. is come to spend a few days with me, I am glad to say. We talked about your poor father's stories of the old days, and the old people

at St. Valéry, with much amusement. I have had the pleasant surprise of a visit from the dear Father Le Vigoureux, and have asked him to lunch. He is to preach the Lent at Smyrna, and will also go to Jerusalem, to visit their splendid church of St. Stephen. I was much interested in the descriptions he gave me of the Holy Land."

*October 2.*—"I am fairly well, but the bad weather has brought back excruciating pains. I cannot go out, and felt very melancholy when Fathers Lejeune and Flament were away. . . . Boulogne is becoming very quiet; the weather has driven visitors away, and at church all the great Feasts are over except All Saints. The sands are deserted, the leaves fall; winter is hastening on. I have fires already."

*October 11.*—"I was so glad, dear Henry, to receive your letter. It is good to know that you entrust me to the Sacred Heart. I am certainly better, and less depressed; also I can lie straight in bed—an impossibility to me for some months past. I told you that I belong to the Third Order of St. Francis. This will help me in my last hour.

"Here the Red Flag is flying, and in the streets they are howling 'Down with the rich!' and singing the *Internationale*; but the Haute Ville is quiet, and I sleep peacefully under the protection of my dear 'Guardians.' . . ."

*November 18.*—"How glad I was to see your handwriting yesterday! I needed something to cheer me. The cold increases my pains, and everything around looks so threatening that I am sometimes afraid. Events in England are very disquieting. The question of the *Unemployed* is terrible to think of. . . . I take great comfort in the prayer, 'Sacred Heart of Jesus, my trust is in Thee.' "

*November 25.*—After alluding to a painful trial, to the sorrow it caused her, and also to her resignation to God's will, she adds :

"Every day I say these words of the *Te Deum* : 'Dignare, Domine, die isto, sine peccato me custodire.' It seems that I must not hope to see you at Christmas. . . . I make a point, though, of telling you that the 'Mother Abbess' will have a good Christmas dinner for her dear 'children.' I am already thinking about it. Ever since their expulsion they have always spent Christmas at my house. What a privilege for me! It is the dinner of Mary and Martha for Our Lord, and I believe He will be with us."

*November 28.*—"I cannot express my delight that I am to see you at Christmas! Is it really true? I thank the good God, for, but for this, my Christmas would have been a cheerless one—no midnight Mass for me, nor even Mass on the day itself, unless the weather become milder.

*December 5.*—"What a day! Impossible to see to do anything. Intense cold, and thick fog, and I am almost too stiff from rheumatism to be able to move. But when my 'sunshine' comes at Christmas, I am sure I shall be better. My heart beats fast with joy only to think of it. The Holy Child will also be with us, and you know how I love Him. How bitter it is to think that the wretched men who govern us are busy teaching little children to hate Him! . . . God bless you! I long to see my *sun*."

It is needless to dilate on my visit that Christmas, which was to be my mother's last on earth.

On January 1 she wrote to me :

"A few lines only, to wish you a happy year—happy, that is, as far as it can be under present circumstances. It is impossible to say '*A happy New Year*' when this cruel persecution of the Church is going on. It makes me very sad, but I am always hoping that God will manifest Himself before long. . . .

"I had the consolation of Mass yesterday and to-day. I have a great devotion for this day, when Our Lord first shed His Precious Blood. I showed Him all my sins, for the Blood He shed suffices for the ransom of the world."

It was to the delicate attention of my old friend and comrade Father Scrépel that my mother owed

the comfort of these Masses. After my departure he occupied my room, visiting my mother daily, and cheering her by his truly filial kindness—so much so that she spoke of him as “my son Ernest.” It will be seen later on that he was with me to receive her last blessing.

January 22 she wrote :

“ For ten days past I have suffered severely, not only from pains caused by the cold, but from sadness. To-morrow the inventory is to be taken at Notre Dame, and our ‘ charming ’ Mayor has appointed an apostate priest, unfrocked, and with wife and children, to be his substitute for the task. The man is an employé at the town sewage works ! ! He is to be paid 300 francs for his hateful services. It is horrible !

“ In England the elections have gone very badly. I shall be dead before seeing the ruin of my poor country, but I am convinced that Freemasonry is beginning to unmask itself and work more openly. Also the life of pleasure and amusement led by so many of the upper classes threatens to lead my dear old country to the abyss. . . .

“ Amidst all the troubles of these days, it is a joy to know that we are ‘ on the side of the strongest,’ and that we who believe in and love our Divine Saviour will by these very evils be helped on towards Heaven. In my loneliness I have much time for reflection, and when I think what will be

the future of these infamous wretches, the persecutors of His people, unless they repent, I feel as much pity for them as execration for their miserable perversity. Even if they were to repent, I doubt if they would ever be in the same *carré*—the same ‘square’ or ‘compartment,’ as the old man at the Little Sisters’ called it—with you, my dear children, in Heaven.”

*March.*—“The month of St. Joseph. I shall make my novena for Marie, and offer for the same intention the acute pains I have had of late, and also my enforced helplessness. . . . To-day is the Crown of Thorns of Our Lord. I also have mine, and am happy to wear it in union with Him, so insulted, so outraged! For my Lent I shall abstain on two days in the week, and also go without butter or sweets. That is all I can do. My greatest fast is the inability to see Marie or Marguerite, and this, with my pains, will make a *good* Lent.”

[*No date.*]—“I am glad you are so well, and apparently cheerful, in spite of everything. . . . I sent a card to express my congratulations, respect, and veneration to the Abbé Dussart, Curé of Portel. He is happy to have had the privilege of being bound and mocked as Our Lord was. What glory he has given to God!

“Your absence, my dearest Henry, is a great cross for me, but this only makes me the more glad to have really given my treasure to God.”

In spite of precautions, my mother became ill from bronchitis early in March. I was sent for, and arrived in the evening of the 18th. She had fainted, from heart weakness, about six o'clock, and feared lest I might not arrive in time. But the doctor declared that, as she was "ready," she might safely wait, and receive Extreme Unction and Communion on the morrow. Keeping the Holy Oils near me, I spent the night in an arm-chair, and next morning administered Holy Communion only, awaiting the visit of her confessor, Father Hoffmann, to propose Extreme Unction.

I quote here from a letter written immediately after the ceremony, and under the emotion of the consoling scene :

" Father Hoffmann said a few words, to which she listened with admirable earnestness and faith. Then, assisted by the Father, I administered the Sacrament. Nothing could be more touching than the way in which she followed all the prayers. She had in her hand, or before her, my crucifix of the vows, which she kissed, repeating, ' My dear Jesus ' ; then, smiling, said some loving words to Louise and me. She speaks with the vivacious eagerness that we know. Just now she gave me instructions relating to certain keys, drawers, papers, etc., when the nursing Sister said : " Madame d'Arras, you are talking too much ; you will tire

yourself.' 'My dear Sister,' answered my mother with vivacity, but smiling kindly, 'these instructions are not usually given after one is dead!' In short, gladness dominates all other feelings. It is truly a going Home."

Meanwhile I had asked, through Monsignor Bisleti, for the Holy Father's blessing. His telegram arrived in the morning of the 21st.

In the evening of the 24th what was our surprise to receive a second, which was worded thus :

"Saint-Père bénit vénérée malade avec effusion de cœur.—Signé SORELLE SARTO."

The Holy Father's Sisters, hearing from the Carmelite convent of my mother's illness, had made a point of sending a telegram themselves.

We began a novena to St. Ignatius. Our invalid took a little of the blessed water with all her potions. Her state improved, and on the 25th I returned to Florennes.

The same day she wrote to my sister, with a trembling hand—the writing in places almost illegible :

"I am much better. It seems to be God's will to prolong my life. Henceforth it shall be wholly for Him. I bless you, as you desire it, and think of you continually. Alas! Henry leaves me to-day,

but what a blessing to have received the Last Sacraments at his hands ! He will soon return. I am very deaf. This is a great trial. I embrace you a thousand times."

From this time she felt more and more detached from the world. "It seems," she said, "that I have taken my seat in the train for Heaven, and that it has already started."

One of the Fathers, who often visited her, aptly compared her to a traveller who, bound for an unknown region, famous for its beauty, tries to imagine the wonders he will meet with there. Her favourite theme was the intensity and eternity of the joys of Heaven, and she loved to repeat the Italian definition of eternity—"Un momento che sta."

A few words she wrote to my sister express her inmost feelings :

"I daily say the beautiful prayer of St. Gertrude, 'An Act of Conformity to the Will of God.' I say it trustingly, and with an endeavour to shape my whole conduct in accordance with it. I sincerely desire nothing but the will of God in all things ; nor could I wish for anything else. I suffer in many ways, but am not anxious, for I say, 'God wills it so ; His holy will be done !' With that, one can bear anything.

"May Our Lord one day pardon all my sins, and grant me a place in His glorious Heaven, for

He knows that I no longer cling to anything on earth. I am quite content that He should, little by little, wean me from all things. It is very beneficial. All I wish for is to be in quietness and aloneness with God."

She wrote to me in July :

" You want to know how I am. Dear Henry, I suffer much and am very weak, but all this is a great blessing, helping me to amass treasure for Heaven, and clearing my way to it. I try to lead a life without sin, and constantly say the prayer, ' Sacred Heart of Jesus, my trust is in Thee.'

" My dear Ernest has had a little set of steps made, to enable me to get into a carriage. I have taken a few drives, and on Saturday a few friends are coming to lunch, and I shall go *downstairs*."

About this time Our Lord sent her a great consolation. Almost all her nephews and nieces, at one time or another, passed through Boulogne, some coming on purpose to see " dear Aunt Louisa." It was felt on both sides that this might be a farewell visit. My mother was the last surviving representative of her generation, and the truly filial affection shown her on these occasions met with a maternal response from the venerable aunt.

I also was again at Boulogne in time for the Feast of St. Aloysius, when the "Mother Abbess" invited to her table all the Fathers whom I had known there—all her "children," as she called them. She was able to preside at the feast with great enjoyment, remarking nevertheless that this was probably her last *Fête de Saint Louis*.

## XIII

### H O M E

IN fact, the hour of recompense was drawing near. With her deep faith and humble confidence, it was the object of her longings, and this valiant Christian spoke with cheerful serenity of her departure for her eternal home.

On September 10 she had an attack of the heart. I was sent for, and on the 11th I administered the Last Sacraments to her for the second time since March 19.

Here I will transcribe a few notes taken from time to time for my sisters, and extracts from letters addressed to them.

*September 11.*—Father Hoffmann informed her of her danger. When I next entered her room, she wept on seeing me. Under pretext of preparing everything, I went out . . . and she soon recovered her serenity.

She followed the prayers. At the moment of Communion, she said the *Domine, non sum dignus* in a tone of the deepest humility. While I was preparing to give Extreme Unction, she said, with

the utmost expression of faith and love : " Sacred Heart of Jesus, I trust in Thee." Father Hoffmann suggested that she should offer to God her thoughts, her heart, and her life. She added : " And my four children."

After the Thanksgiving I found her very bright. She said : " I feel much better : I do not think I am going yet."

*September 12.*—She is very pale, and the pulse is irregular, but, except for occasional depression, she is very cheerful. She said : " My dear Lord, You will not say that I have not told You to do *what You will, and when You will, and as You will*, for I am saying it to You all day long." She kisses her crucifix, is ever ready to smile ; sometimes even to laugh, and now and then make one of the humorous little remarks habitual to her.

*September 17.*—She is most delicately thoughtful and self-forgotten. I had to take one of the Fathers to the town, as he was only passing through, and she said to me : " Do not imagine that I am fretting while you are away ; I am so glad to know that you are doing what you have to do."

The same day she wrote to my Carmelite sister :

" Darling, two words only. I am sending you 200 francs : 100 given by Father P., and 100 that I add for ' the ass ' and the Lenten chocolate."

*September 21.*—A bad night. Seeing her suffering, I asked her to think of Our Lord on the cross. " It

is the only thing that gives relief," she answered, smiling.

*September 28.*—On her alluding to her death, I reminded her that the time of her summons was in Our Lord's hands, and that to console ourselves, my sisters and I said that all depended on His Divine Heart. She took my hand, saying : " What gratitude I owe to our good God for giving me such children as mine are ! Oh, my God, how good you have been to me ! And to think that some children do not dare to speak of death to their mother, when it is a happiness to me to think and speak of it. What a grace, what an incomparable grace, it is to be a Catholic !" And she lovingly kissed her crucifix.

I wish you could see the expression of her face when, while saying the *Ecce Agnus Dei*, I present to her the Sacred Host. It is so full of faith. She said just now : " Only to think that every morning, here, near my bed, and in your hands, *HE is here !* "

*September 25.*—This morning came a card from Father Flament : " Monseigneur Williez sends Madame d'Arras his most paternal benediction." Your letter gladdened my mother at half-past one, and about three o'clock we had a telegram from Rome :

" Saint Père bénit vénérée malade et ses enfants avec effusion de cœur.—SORELLE SARTO."

How many causes of joy in a few hours ! But the thought that I must leave on Thursday is a sad trial.

It happens also that the nursing Sisters (Sœurs de Bon Secours) begin their retreat now, and will be unable to come during the day.

*September 27 (Thursday).*—My mother has been admirable. When I told her I must go, she said : “ I gave you to God, and not for anything in the world would I recall my gift.” But *afterwards*, when I was not there to be saddened, she wept much, and said to the Sister : “ He is going, and I shall see him no more !”

I shortened the leave-taking as much as possible, to spare her. She smilingly said, “ My *sun* is disappearing !” but I answered that it was only a brief eclipse, and that she would soon see me again. Then I went.

On October 17 I was recalled by telegram, as my mother was worse. On the 18th I wrote to my sister :

“ As a proof of how brave she is, you must have received, as I did yesterday, a card from her. What energy she has ! Her feet are frightfully swollen and painful. When the pain is worse, she kisses the feet of her crucifix.”

*October 19.*—For a moment yesterday she complained of the pain, but immediately reproached herself for doing so, declaring that she accepted the will of God in all things. This morning, after speaking of death with the greatest calmness, she said : “ I hope it is not wrong, but I long for the end.”

*October 21.*—The night was comparatively good, and a great consolation was in store for her this morning. I received the authorization to say Mass in her room.

Remembering the particular devotion she always had to the Holy Mass, even before her reception into the Church, it may be imagined how keenly this ineffably delicate attention (if one may so express it) on the part of Our Lord was appreciated by my mother during the eleven days that remained to her on earth.

*October 24.*—Mother will write to you to-morrow. I sometimes wish you could take my place, and see her calmness, joy, and peace. Her little jests, her cheerful laugh, show better than any words that Our Lord has the secret of assuaging every pain.

The same day she wrote to Father Damerval :

“ MY REVEREND FATHER,

“ I send you a few lines of respectful adieu. For you, in China, and I, at Boulogne, will never see each other again. For two months I have been very ill and in much pain, but the prayers of my dear children have helped me to place myself in the Heart of Jesus, and to wish only for what He wills. Then I have consolations in spite of everything. I have my Henry with me, always smiling, and my little Louise. Marguerite is always very fervent, and Marie is better in health. Give us all your blessing, dear Father, and with my deepest respect and affection, I hope to meet you in Heaven.”

October 26.—To-day brought a new and much appreciated pleasure. The Rev. Father Peultier, formerly the Father Prefect of my college days having just spent a month in Rome, came to see my mother on his return, and bring news of her Carmelite, for which she was very grateful to him and to Our Lord. She sent some additions to the mid-day repast of the Fathers, in his honour, as she was unable to have the pleasure of giving a dinner herself.

The 26th was the last day on which she was able to show a certain alertness and energy. The following days witnessed an evident sinking of her strength.

On the 28th she had said to the nursing Sister : “ I wish very much that Our Lord would take me, but I dare not say so to Henry : *he might be hurt.*” The Sister repeated her words before me, so I said to her : “ When, long ago, I took you, dear mother, to Paris, to put you into the train for Nice, my heart was very full when it started, but I consoled myself by thinking of the beautiful flowers and sunshine of the Côte d’Azur, which would give you enjoyment and renew your strength. I will try also to console myself in the same way when you start for the Côte d’Azur of Heaven.” This comforted her much, and quite relieved her mind. When, before going to the cathedral as usual in the evening, I asked if she had any commissions, she said : “ Ask for me perfect resignation, and, if it be God’s will, departure for Heaven.”

She hopes, apparently, that she may be called away to keep the Feast of All Saints on high. Will it be so ?

In spite of her weakness, she made use of her book at my Mass this morning, and was praying, the server tells me, with great recollection.

*October 28.*—Mother is much weaker. She said to me : “ It is useless to pray for my recovery : I shall not get better ; it is best to pray for a good and holy death.”

She asks every day for my blessing, and receives it with the utmost piety. Afterwards I said, “ It is for you, mother, now to give your blessing to us all ” ; and I knelt down. Then, with joined hands, closed eyes, and with an expression of the deepest peace in her countenance, she said slowly : “ I bless you, Henry, Marie, Marguerite, and Louise, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

Soon afterwards Father Scrépel came to express regret that he must be absent all the morning. She took his hand and insisted on the words *à Dieu !* The Father thanked her, and she asked him : “ What have I done ? ”

A little later she said to Father Flament : “ I know perfectly how I am.”

She is very collected and thinks of everything. The Sister who attends her had let the hour for her own meal pass unnoticed. Suddenly my mother looked at the timepiece. “ It is a quarter to one,”

she said. "You ought to have had your dinner three-quarters of an hour ago! You must be hungry. Go at once!"

Seeing that at one time she was looking better, I said to the Sister: "She is very bright!" She looked at the Sister and said: "I have my sunshine!"

One of these last days she was wearing a simple silver bracelet, given to her by my sister Marguerite when leaving to join the Little Sisters of the Poor. Father Hoffmann suggested that she should take it off, so as to die like a poor person and a true Tertiary of St. Francis. She instantly obeyed, and when the Father was gone, I saw her, without saying anything, remove the two small brilliants she wore in her ears.

About four o'clock, to give her pleasure, Father Scrépel and I went to take tea with her. Looking at the dull grey sky through the window, she said, laughing: "What beautiful weather! A sky worthy of Nice!"

All these little details, insignificant as they are in themselves, help to give the physiognomy of this dear soul, so courageous to the end! They are, in fact, but another aspect of her calm and deep faith. "I only wish for what He wills," she would say. "When will Our Lord come for me? When He pleases. That is best!" Once she prayed, "Oh, Jesus, when wilt Thou come?" but added, "I should not say that: it is a kind of complaining. . . . When He wills!"

On the 30th, the eve of her death, she wished to write to her Carmelite. She was worn out, but, with an energy that brought tears to our eyes, she tried twenty times within three or four hours. The card bears witness to her weakness. The words, scarcely formed, are repeated two or three times. It is written in English.

“ MY DARLING, MY DEAR DARLING—I write to you, dearest Marguerite, *à Dieu*. I am too weak to be able to express myself. My sweet, I bless you with all ” (the sentence is illegible). “ I will pray for you with all my heart.

“ Your poor old mammy,”

“ LOUISE.”

Towards evening she said : “ I should like to die to-morrow.” “ You are in a great hurry,” replied the Sister, smiling. “ You spoke yesterday of going on All Saints’ Day.” “ What is to-morrow ?” “ Only All Saints’ Eve.” “ Oh, well,” she said, with a smile, “ it is much the same thing !”

The night from the 30th to the 31st was a very trying one. I went to her several times. About one in the morning she wished me to hear her confession. At half-past four I gave her Holy Communion. Shortly before she had asked me to send her two best dresses to the Society of Workers for Poor Churches. As her life seemed likely to linger yet awhile, I left Father Scrépel with her, and pre-

pared to say Mass. I thought my mother too far gone to be able to unite herself to it, but learnt afterwards from Father Scrépel that she bowed her head at the Elevation, and struck her breast at the *Domine, non sum dignus*. Thus she had the supreme consolation of assisting, a few hours before entering Eternity, at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and of adoring the Precious Blood, to which she had so tender a devotion. What treasures of Divine thoughtfulness are in the Sacred Heart of Our Lord !

About half-past seven I said to her : “ Mother, the time is not yet come to depart for Heaven, but we are going to say the Litanies together.” And I began the Prayers for the Dying. Soon after she said : “ I offer my life for Marie, for Marguerite, for Louise.” I said, smiling : “ And poor Henry is forgotten ?” Then, with a smile, she drew me to her and kissed me.

The time that followed she spent in invocations, and in frequently kissing her crucifix.

About nine o'clock Father Hoffmann came. She conversed with him and made her confession. Shortly afterwards she smilingly took leave of Dr. Houzel.

I then proposed that we should finish saying the Litanies, and slowly recited the “ Depart, Christian Soul.” She followed it, and, with perfect calmness, herself made the responses to all the prayers.

About ten o'clock I had just gone down with Father Scrépel, when I was suddenly called. It

was the end. Father Scrépel having providentially (it seemed) forgotten his watch, had come back for it, so that he also was there.

We said the Rosary. I gave the absolution several times. She ceased to breathe.

It was about half-past ten in the morning, and the Vigil of All Saints. Everyone had the conviction that she would keep the great festival of the morrow at "Home."

She was laid out, wearing the black veil of the Tertiaries. The expression of her face, illumined by a smile, struck the visitors, who were numerous on All Saints' Day. Some came several times, to contemplate "the face of a Saint" who, as one of them remarked, "resembled an Abbess of the Middle Ages."

The funeral took place on the 3rd, and was very largely attended. Two of her nephews and two nieces had come from England. Many poor were present, and the Little Sisters brought their old people. It had rained early in the morning, but at the hour for the funeral the sun came out, and it seems that the old folks said to one another: "It is because *Maman d'Arras* does not want us to take cold."

In an envelope, "to be opened after her death," I found her spiritual testament.

"In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

“ I leave my soul to God, my Creator, and entreat Him, of His infinite mercy, to receive it ; not to judge it according to its deserts, but to grant it forgiveness and eternal life through the merits of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who offered Himself a sacrifice on the Cross for all mankind.

“ I die in union with our Holy Mother, the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Church. I firmly believe all that she teaches : I believe and confess all that is contained in the Creed and in the Commandments of the Church ; all the Sacraments, all the mysteries as taught by the Church. I protest that I would gladly give my life for the Catholic Faith and for each of its dogmas ; and I consider myself one of the happiest of women to have been called to the only true Faith.

“ I pray God to pardon all my sins. I detest them with all my heart, and I place them in His Divine wounds, to be cleansed by His Blood.

“ I commend to God my beloved children. I beg them to believe that the last beatings of my heart were, after God, for them, that I loved them until my latest sigh, with all the tenderness of my heart, and that I hope, by God’s mercy, to meet them again in Heaven, and be reunited with them for all eternity.

“ I offer to God the sacrifice of my life, and pray Him to accept it in expiation for my sins.

“ I wish to be buried as simply as possible, without any display, feeling my great unworthiness. I

desire the money which would have been spent on a more costly funeral to be given to the poor.

“ I hope the poor will be so kind as to accompany me to the grave. I have always loved them, seeing in them Our Lord Jesus Christ, and I shall consider myself much honoured by their presence in my funeral procession.”

On March 9 she had written :

“ I am sending a few words to Mme. de Préville. The death of her mother will be a great sorrow. But how her affliction is softened by so holy a death ! To see a beloved mother’s departure for Paradise, to know that she is with God, *sure* of her eternal happiness—what comfort in the midst of tears !”

These notes and memories cannot be more happily concluded than by these words.

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

#### TO PAGE 2, INTRODUCTION

LECHMERE, JOSCELYNE, born 1871, son of the late Sir Edmund Lechmere, 3rd Baronet, M.P. of The Rhydd, Worcester, and Louisa Katherine, daughter of John Haigh, of Whitwell Hall, York (this lady was the translator into English of the beautiful liturgy of the Greek Church); married (1907) Lily, daughter of John Cassavetti, of Myr Hall, Torquay. The Lechmere family, which has held lands at Hanley, in Worcestershire, since William I., maintained a chaplaincy at Townhope, their Herefordshire seat, early in the seventeenth century. At least two of its members became priests at that period, of whom one, Dr. Edmund Lechmere, died at Douai College about 1640, leaving works which "have merited," says Dodd, "a preference to all our controversial writers for acuteness and just reasoning." Mr. Joscelyne Lechmere, who has returned with alacrity to the old Faith, also possesses an effective pen.\*

\* From *The Catholic Who's Who* for 1910.

## APPENDIX B

### TO PAGE 2, INTRODUCTION

SIR WALTER SCOTT, in his *Antiquities of the Scottish Borders*, narrates various historical episodes respecting the northern ancestors of this lady, the heads of the clans of Murray and Scott. The following tradition, preserved in both families, possesses an interest all its own :

Sir Gideon Murray, from his stronghold of Elibank Tower, was engaged with others of his name in carrying on a feud with their ancient enemies the clan of the Scotts. As the possessions of both parties lay contiguous on many points, they were at no loss for opportunities of exercising their enmity "according to the custom of the Marches."

Early in the seventeenth century, William (afterwards Sir William) Scott of Harden led a raid upon the Murrays of Elibank. He found them on their guard, was defeated and taken in the act of driving off their cattle.

Returning with his captive to the castle, Sir Gideon was met by his lady, who, congratulating him on his victory, inquired as to the fate he destined for the prisoner.

“ To the gallows with the marauder !” was the answer.

“ Hout na, Sir Gideon !” quoth the dame. “ Wad ye hang the winsome young laird, when ye hae three ill-favoured daughters unwed ?”

The hint pleased the Baron. “ Right !” he said ; “ he shall marry our daughter Meikle-mouthed Meg, or he shall swing for it !”

When the alternative was proposed to the prisoner, he stoutly declared he would rather be hanged ! But when actually on the way to execution, he retracted his ungallant choice, and preferred to be tied to Meikle-mouthed Meg (whose real name was Agnes) rather than to the gallows-tree.

Fortunately, this strange union proved a very happy one. It also healed the ancient feud between the two clans. The couple were blessed with a very large family, and to each child Sir William bequeathed ample estates. His second son, Sir Gideon, was created Earl of Tarras on his marriage with Agnes, Countess of Buccleuch.

## APPENDIX C

TO PAGE 38 OF "MY CONVERSION"

THE Benedictine Nuns of Cambrai, now of Stanbrook, Worcestershire, are the direct descendants, in the spiritual order, of Blessed Thomas More, whose grandson, Cresacre More, founded the Monastery of Cambrai, for the sake of his daughter Helen, Dame Gertrude More. She was leader of a band of nine postulants who received the Benedictine habit at Cambrai in 1623.

In October, 1793, the community, numbering twenty-one, was arrested by order of the revolutionary French Government, carried to Compiègne, and imprisoned for eight months in a former monastery of the Visitation. Within a few weeks four of the nuns, as also their aged chaplain, Father Walker, died from the effects of harsh treatment, cold, and want.

In a room opposite to that of the seventeen remaining Benedictines, the sixteen Carmelites of Compiègne were imprisoned until they were sent to Paris, three days before their martyrdom, on July 16, 1794. Such poor garments as they left behind them were taken to the Benedictine prisoners,

who knelt to receive them as sacred relics, and then wore them in place of their own tattered habits.

The death of Robespierre, on July 28, saved the Benedictines from the guillotine, but they still remained prisoners until April 24, 1795, when, with their chaplain and Mr. Roper, a relation of one of the nuns, they left Compiègne, and reached London in a state of utter destitution on May 4. After taking charge of a girls' school at Woolton, near Liverpool, they moved, in 1807, to Abbot's Salford, near Evesham, and thence, in 1838, to Stanbrook House, near Worcester, which has grown into the beautiful abbey of the present day. Here the traditions of old times have been carefully preserved, and the relics of the martyred Carmelites are among the abbey's most treasured possessions.\*

\* Summarized from *The Martyrs of Compiègne*, by Eleanor Mary Willson. Art and Book Company, 1907.

## APPENDIX D

### TO PAGE 56 OF "MY CONVERSION"

THE passage referred to (p. 56) by Miss Lechmere is probably either of the two following ones, quoted from Macaulay's "Essay on Ranke's *History of the Popes*" :

I. "There is not, and there never was on this earth, a work of human policy so well deserving of examination as the Roman Catholic Church. No other institution is left standing which carries the mind back to the times when the smoke of sacrifice rose from the Pantheon, and when camelopards and tigers bounded in the Flavian Amphitheatre. The proudest royal houses are but of yesterday when compared with the line of the Supreme Pontiffs. . . . The Papacy remains, not in decay, not a mere antique, but full of life and youthful vigour. . . . Nor do we see any sign which indicates that the term of her long dominion is approaching. She saw the commencement of all the governments and of all the ecclesiastical establishments that now exist in the world, and we feel no assurance that she is not destined to see the end of them all. She was great and respected before the Saxon had

set foot on Britain, before the Frank had passed the Rhine, when Grecian eloquence still flourished in Antioch, when idols were still worshipped in the temple of Mecca. And she may still exist in undiminished vigour when some traveller from New Zealand shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's."

2. "It is impossible to deny that the polity of the Church of Rome is the very masterpiece of human wisdom. In truth, nothing but such a polity could, against such assaults, have borne up such doctrines."

## APPENDIX E

TO PAGE 69 OF "MADAME D'ARRAS"

THIS remark will be further explained by the following letters from Madame d'Arras to one of her friends in the community at Stanbrook, which are here given by the kind permission of the Lady Abbess.

The first letter was written in 1880, the other in 1901.

" 11 BIS, RUE ST. JEAN,  
" BOULOGNE-SUR-MER.

" . . . Last Friday week we were awakened by a violent ringing and knocking at our door, to tell us that the work of expulsion of the Redemptorists was begun. My husband immediately got up and hastened to the spot. A large body of gendarmes, soldiers, and police, with the three Commissaires, were already there, with the locksmiths to break open the doors. A vast crowd had assembled, some crying, "Down with the Fathers!" others crying, "Long live the Fathers! Long live religion!" The dreadful sounds of the breaking open of the doors of the Redemptorist monastery could be distinctly heard, mingled with the murmurs and

cries of the crowd like the roar of the sea. At length the dreadful work was done, and the Fathers came forth singly, accompanied on either side by the principal gentlemen of the town, and on the way to the Curé's house they had an ovation, all the ladies and all the Catholic gentlemen following them and offering them flowers. . . . The last to come forth was my poor old confessor, Père R——, an Alsatian, nearly eighty years of age. It was sad to see him so feeble, and hardly able to walk, pushed and hustled by the crowd, good and bad. Monsieur d'Arras was with the Superior of the Passionists as witness, but the Commissaires de police ordered him and all the other gentlemen to go. They refused, but were compelled by force. One lady was arrested for crying, 'Down with the burglars!' A poor English governess was fined forty francs for calling the police 'cowards.' . . . You cannot imagine the insults poured out by the wretches who had been paid to insult the Fathers. These, on reaching the *Doyen's* house, addressed us from the windows, and gave us their benediction amid the tears of many. But the expulsion of the Redemptorists was nothing to that of the Passionists. The Jesuits' college here (of which Father d'Arras was Rector) and at Amiens have just been closed, and the poor boys had twenty-four hours given them to disperse. We have taken in a poor little Irish boy, whose parents live near Dublin. Of course, there was no time to let them know, so we took him

to be with us till his parents can write and tell him what to do. It was a dreadful blow to us, and now Henry is gone to Lille to help the Fathers to open a college there for the Boulogne pupils."

" 11 BIS, RUE ST. JEAN,

" BOULOGNE-SUR-MER,

" September 19, 1901.

" The Carmelite nuns are also turned out of their convent by this wicked and abominable law, and have left Trévoux . . . and are gone to Frascati, near Rome. . . . My beloved Henry and another Father and Brother are coming to be with me, but how long we shall be left in peace remains to be seen. I cannot tell you what I am suffering, seeing all that is going on. The Religious Orders are all leaving France. The nuns of Nazareth and of 'Marie Réparatrice' are gone, the Chartreux of Montreuil, the Benedictines of Solesmes, and so many, many others. It is terrible. At a small place near Amiens they have knocked down no less than five 'Calvaries' and outraged Our Blessed Saviour's image. . . . Numbers of Jesuit Fathers are going to China, Madagascar, Ceylon, etc. . . . and numbers of the Religious Orders, if this infamous Government continues in France, will go to America. The exit of the Orders will bring *so much misery*. *Thousands* will be thrown out of work, and lose the assistance the religious give them. The Jesuit college where Henri was Rector, supported thirty

families in one village alone. The Little Sisters of the Poor are, up to now, left undisturbed. The monsters who govern us would hardly care to have 20,000 poor old creatures, now entirely supported by the Little Sisters in France, for whom they do not pay one halfpenny, thrown on their hands."

THE END









